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New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Biabaorroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Ms. Tincopa
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Lord Triesman
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mapongi
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2006/728)

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06-52553 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2006/728)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Pronk to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan, document S/2006/728.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. I now give the floor to Mr. Pronk.

Mr. Pronk: I last briefed the Council half a year ago, in March (see S/PV.5392). At that time, I said that the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the north and the south was on track. It still is. However, it is a bumpy ride, and the train can easily derail. The peace is fragile, and the confidence gap between the north and the south is widening.

I am glad to report that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) has completed almost 100 per cent — exactly 99 per cent — of its deployment in southern Sudan. We have fulfilled our mandate in eastern Sudan and have withdrawn the troops from the area. The authorities have given assurances that United Nations humanitarian and development efforts will continue unhindered.

The withdrawal of the United Nations from the east has sent a strong signal to the people of the Sudan that the United Nations came to eastern Sudan upon the invitation of the Government, accomplished its task and left. There was no hidden agenda to occupy or to colonize, as is the ongoing rhetoric about the United Nations vis-à-vis other parts of the country.

We continue to monitor the Eritrean-mediated talks between the Sudanese Government and the Eastern Front, which, at last, began in Asmara three months ago. They are taking place without the United Nations and without others as international observers. That is different from the north-south talks in Naivasha or the Darfur talks in Abuja, but the parties have the right, and they deserve the opportunity, to try to reach an agreement all by themselves. They have informed us that they expect to sign an agreement before the commencement of Ramadan, and that is very soon.

Concerns, however, remain: an asymmetry of the talks between a strong Government of the Sudan and a weak Eastern Front, and a possible disconnect between the leaders of the Eastern Front and their constituencies on the ground. Moreover, the talks should not take the shape of negotiations between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of Eritrea about, but without, the people of the east. Their true participation is essential in order to restore security and to tackle the root causes of the conflict.

As for the south itself, CPA implementation in southern Sudan, although slow, remains on course. The government of Southern Sudan, which with limited resources has been working hard to transform southern Sudan from a war-torn region into a region with a functioning administration has done a good job. The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly meets regularly and is a forum for healthy debate and accountability. President Kiir has reshuffled his cabinet and his administration in order to enhance good governance and abate corruption. His recent 200-day action plan is a courageous effort to engender a culture in public service that is action-oriented and puts the needs of the people at the forefront. The political environment has encouraged relatively free media. With the cooperation of the government of Southern Sudan, United Nations Radio Miraya — Radio Mirror — started broadcasting

at the end of June 2006 and is being well appreciated throughout southern Sudan.

The Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) remains the cornerstone of the Peace Agreement. Chaired by the United Nations, it is the best-functioning institution of the CPA. The redeployment of the forces is on track. On 9 July 2007, all Sudanese armed forces will have to be withdrawn from the south. I have no reason to expect that this will not happen. However, the presence of the so-called other armed groups poses a threat. The Other Armed Groups Collaborative Committee envisioned in the CPA has started meeting, but the actual alignment status, composition and location of these groups remains vague. In a number of areas in the south, commanders of the former alternative movement, the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF), have refused to abide by the joint Juba declaration, adopted earlier this year, which provides for their integration into the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Many people in the south suspect that the north is still supporting these commanders in order to destabilize the south, to control disputed areas and oil fields and to create uncertainty about the border.

Six months ago, I highlighted the factors behind the ongoing violence in the south. Since then, the violence has not decreased. On the contrary, we have had to deal with it throughout southern Sudan — tribal conflicts, land and water disputes, cattle looting, an abundance of arms, fights between settlers and nomads, youth unemployment and crime and a lack of discipline among unpaid soldiers, in addition to the presence of the other armed groups and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). However, our presence in southern Sudan has helped. In cooperation with the government of Southern Sudan, our military, together with the humanitarian and the civilian elements of the mission, has been able to prevent escalations. Any cannibalization of forces for diversion to another part of Sudan, therefore, will have consequences for the peace in southern Sudan. UNMIS, the nightwatchman, should not be asked to pack up and go somewhere else in the afternoon.

At the same time, there is a need for international assistance in security-sector reform. The formation and training of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) is way behind schedule. There has been a rise in cases of indiscipline in SPLA. International help, from a number of countries, which I do not have in my United Nations mandate, is urgently required to train the SPLA into a professional and democratic army.

Southern Sudan remains in urgent need of reconstruction and developmental assistance. The absence of basic facilities like water, sanitation, health care and education has now forced the people to question what difference peace has made in their lives and those of their children. Some progress has been made. Between January and June this year, over 300 kilometres of roads have been cleared of mines and repaired. The UNICEF "Go to School" campaign has provided school supplies to 1.6 million southern Sudanese schoolchildren. However, coverage stands at only half of the funding for this year's requirements as presented in our work plan. This also affects our capacity to provide services for returning refugees and displaced people. An estimated 160,000 people returned between January and July this year. With the end of the rainy season approaching, large numbers of returnees will be in urgent need of basic services. In the coming year we shall need more funds for relief and return and for reconstruction and development. The people in southern Sudan are still heartbreakingly poor.

The performance of the National Congress Party (NCP) within the Government of National Unity is not encouraging. The NCP has accepted CPA in letter but seems to ignore it in spirit. It continues to stall the functioning of almost all critical institutions of the CPA and has not accepted, to this day, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) as an equal partner. The isolation of SPLM ministers who are part of the Government of National Unity has created an asymmetry in the Government, thereby relegating "making unity attractive", which is part of our mandate, to a distant dream. This asymmetry has also caused every important issue to be put on the back burner.

We had high expectations of the long-awaited Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC), which to our disappointment has turned out to be a forum that has yet to resolve a single one of the issues forwarded by CJMC. Instead of acting as a political body that solves political questions, CPC has become a legalistic club preserving the status quo. It has acted merely as a secretariat that steers every contentious issue towards the Presidency, where the outcome has been no different.

No progress has been made on the issue of Abyei. As a result, Abyei remains devoid of any governance structure, leaving the people without any formal policing, public sanitation or health services. Abyei is the test case for CPA implementation.

In the key area of oil, the parties continue to disagree on the status of the National Petroleum Commission. The calculation and subsequent distribution of oil revenues lack the transparency needed to ensure fairness and accuracy.

The demarcation of the north-south border remains unresolved. The Border Committee has yet to undertake any substantive work. This task is urgent because the absence of a clearly delineated border has consequences for the redeployment of forces, the distribution of oil revenues, JIU formation, the elections and, eventually, the referendum.

Progress in the peace talks between the Government of Uganda and LRA is a reason for hope. LRA has agreed to bring together its forces — which turned out to be much larger than we had expected — in assembly areas in southern Sudan. If the present cessation of hostilities lasts, peace can be brought to northern Uganda, and this will have a significant spillover effect in the region, including in the Sudan.

The State security structure in northern Sudan continues to harass and intimidate all opposition to the Government. There has been a crackdown on political freedoms in the country, with heavy-handed tactics used against peaceful demonstrations by the opposition and by civilians protesting against Government policies. Human rights violations, in particular by the State security forces, have not decreased. No progress has been made in bringing national security laws into line with the new Constitution.

As stated during my last briefing, I had commended the decision of the Governor of Khartoum to cease all forced relocations from the IDP camps around Khartoum. I am pleased to announce that he has stood by his decision. However, last month, the authorities in the neighbouring state of Gezira began demolishing the houses of a large community in the Dar Assalam camp, using overwhelming force. Thousands of families have been forcibly relocated to places that have no basic services. This inhumane treatment is a violation of international humanitarian law. It is also far below what was expected after the adoption of the new Constitution.

I am alarmed at the recent kidnapping and beheading, in Khartoum, of Mr. Mohammad Taha, editor-in-chief of the Sudanese newspaper *Al-Wifaq*. This brutal murder has been claimed by Al-Qaida. True or not, the style of execution is alien to the Sudanese environment and is indicative of a foreign presence. Other journalists have received similar threats. This is an attack on freedom of expression. This heinous crime can roll back any progress made in liberalizing the media through forced self-censorship. That would be a setback. Since the adoption of the Constitution, in mid-2005, the Sudanese press has become politically more diversified and agile, using its rights and freedoms, as it should do in a country striving for democracy.

During my last brief I commended the Government for concluding the status-of-forces agreement. However, I cautioned that the implementation of the agreement would indicate its success or failure. I am not so positive any more. The authorities continue to arrest and detain UNMIS national staff members. Recently two international staff members were also manhandled and arrested. The Government has refused to allow any broadcasts by UN Radio in northern Sudan, including Darfur. It has restricted United Nations access in Abyei. Intentional delays — often more than eight months long — in clearing critical equipment through customs at Khartoum airport are severely impacting our operations. Our monitors have not been given full access to detention facilities, in particular those run by national security. All in all, that hinders the work mandated to us by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which was signed by the Government, and is a violation of the status-of-forces agreement.

I now turn to Darfur. The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) is only four months old, but it is nearly dead. It is in a coma. It ought to be under intensive care, but it is not.

It is a good Agreement. The peace talks resulted in a balanced text, somewhere in the middle of the extreme positions taken by the Government and the rebel movements. Had they continued negotiating another year, the outcome would have been more or less the same. In hindsight, maybe we should have taken more time — not to get a better agreement, but in order to bring on board all parties. Only the Government and the Mini Minawi faction of the Sudanese Liberation Movement have signed. Abdul Wahid's faction did not sign. They should have. They

were wrong, but they took a political decision to stand aside. That does not make them terrorists. Abdul Wahid's people, most of them Furs, the largest African tribe of Darfur, stood aside, but they have not reverted to fighting either. They have kept the earlier agreement that they had signed, so we have to bring them on board. That is the first condition for bringing the DPA out of its coma.

After the signing of the DPA, parties which did not sign were excluded from the institutions, in particular from the Ceasefire Commission (CFC). That, too, was wrong. They were told: First sign, then talk. That further split the rebel movements. There are now five to seven different groups, including the National Redemption Front, which in July launched an attack in West Kordofan. We have condemned that attack. Sadly, it provided the Government with an excuse for continuous attacks and air raids under the pretext that the civilian population had to be protected. However, it is an outright violation of the DPA. We need a truce. That is the second condition for bringing the DPA out of its coma. Mini Minawi can play a role, maybe, in mediating between his present and his former allies in order to finally get peace on the ground.

Since its signing, the DPA has been violated day after day, week after week. There was a rise in violence after the signing of the DPA. The use of rape as a tool of terror is frequent and again on the rise. The attackers show little mercy towards women and children. Villages are being attacked and bombed in the middle of the night. White helicopters are being used to support the offensive operations of the Sudan Armed Forces. The freedom of movement of humanitarian and other United Nations workers has been severely curtailed and violence against them stepped up. Twelve of them have been killed just in the past two months. The situation in and around the camps remains precarious, and violence by militia against internally displaced persons, including women, is brutal and degrading.

The tragedy is that none of the violations has been addressed in the CFC. It simply does not function. It has been hijacked by the signatories, it is not well chaired, non-signatories have been excluded, and the United Nations has been silenced. In the southern Sudan, the CJMC is one of the most important pillars of the CPA. If it were taken out, the CPA would be paralyzed. That is exactly the present state of the DPA, so the third condition is to start addressing the violations of the DPA through a renewed, fully representative, but authoritative CFC.

Since the DPA does not function, violations remain unsanctioned. Most people in Darfur have lost faith in the DPA. Many did not have it from the beginning. We should be realistic. The DPA in its present form, even though it is theoretically a good agreement, will not get adequate support beyond those who have already signed. We will have to start new consultations, but we must avoid labelling those consultations as a reopening of the peace negotiations. We must talk, add, improve and give an opportunity to those who feel excluded and form at least one third of the population of Darfur. We must get their interests guaranteed, on paper as well as in reality. That is the fourth condition for bringing the DPA out of its coma.

There is a fifth condition. The Security Council, in adopting resolution 1706 (2006), made it crystal clear that the international community wants a transition from the present African Union peacekeeping force to a United Nations force. The Council has also invited the consent of the Government to that deployment. From its side, since February the Government has also been crystal clear. It is against the transition. That is unwise. UNMIS has proven to be a fair and effective peacekeeper in the southern Sudan. We can and will do the same in Darfur.

The United Nations does not deserve the insinuations from the Sudanese political leadership in power. We do not intend to recolonize, nor are we laying a carpet for others to do so. We do not have a hidden agenda. Our only aim is to protect the people, while respecting the sovereignty of the Sudanese nation. Secretary-General Kofi Anan has clearly said that "without the consent of the Sudanese Government, the transition will not be possible". However, getting the consent of the Government requires consultations. A transition to a United Nations force has to be made attractive to the Sudanese leadership in order to get its support. That also requires trust, confidence-building and time. It requires that those in favour of a transition and those against it should refrain from the present collision course. It also requires that the present African Union force stay until the consent is acquired. The African Union is less effective than it was a year ago, but its presence is essential. The departure of the African Union would leave the people in the camps unprotected and vulnerable to anyone who would wish

to harm them and resume the cleansing of 2003 and 2004.

Those are five essential conditions to revive the DPA and bring it out of its coma. Together they would form a plan for the short-term — say, until the end of the year. If we do that, we can work out a plan for the period thereafter. On the basis of our experience on the ground, we will be more than happy to share with the Council our views on the contours of such a plan for the longer term.

The five points, therefore, are: get everybody on board; establish a truce; reform the CFC; resume talks to improve the DPA; and get off the collision course, both within the Sudan as well as internationally. In short, de-link what should be done today to save the DPA from tomorrow's actions to get a renewed and fully robust peace force on the ground.

The President: I thank Mr. Pronk for his briefing.

As there is no list of speakers for this meeting, I would invite Council members who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat.

On behalf of the members of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Lord Triesman, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom.

Lord Triesman (United Kingdom): May I begin by thanking Special Representative Pronk for his comprehensive briefing and for all of the efforts that he and his team are making to bring peace and security to the Sudan. The progress in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) owes a great deal to their efforts. Special Representative Pronk has also made plain this afternoon the continuing problems.

We must continue to work to underpin the CPA, where the United Nations Mission in southern Sudan has played such a valuable role. As was borne out in the Council's visit to the Sudan in May, it is clear that embedding peace in southern Sudan also depends upon on our ability to secure peace in Darfur.

On 31 August, the Council decided to authorize a United Nations mission to support the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). The Council remains united in its view that a United Nations force is the only solution to the crisis in Darfur. The African Union (AU) itself and the Council have favoured transition from the AU to the United Nations in Darfur for many months. We have all recognized that the complex task of implementing the DPA requires a larger, better supported and multidimensional peace operation. That is no reflection on the exceptional efforts of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), which has done a remarkable job in very difficult circumstances but, rather, a recognition, fully shared by Africa's leaders, that the United Nations is best placed to provide the sustainable and comprehensive international peacebuilding support that Darfur needs.

It is unacceptable that the Government of the Sudan has so far refused to accept the idea of a United Nations force in Darfur, despite its successful cooperation with the United Nations force with an almost identical mandate in southern Sudan. Worse, the Government of the Sudan has proposed its own approach to implementing by military force the Darfur Peace Agreement, an approach that violates the Agreement and the Government's commitment to it, as well as resolution 1590 (2005) and 1591 (2005). In the words of Kofi Annan, that will be catastrophic for the people of the region.

We are now at a tipping point for the future of Darfur. Antagonists, as we have just heard, have returned to violence, and humanitarian groups and AMIS forces are losing lives, along with the innocent people of Darfur. We need to arrest that collapse into chaos. My Government sees the priorities for resolving the tragedy of Darfur as clear and compelling.

First, the Government of the Sudan and rebel groups must immediately stop fighting in Darfur — what Special Representative Pronk called a truce.

Secondly, non-signatories must accept the Darfur Peace Agreement, and it must be implemented by all.

Thirdly, we must prevent the development of a security vacuum. The Government of the Sudan must agree to the continuation of the African Union force and accept its transition to a United Nations force. We have to ask, in full recognition of the gravity of such a request, that the African Union Peace and Security Council continue its brave and arduous task of peacekeeping in Darfur while we intensify efforts to persuade the Government of the Sudan to accept a United Nations force to succeed AMIS. We look

forward to the crucial AU meeting to be held later this week.

The United Nations and all of us must deepen and accelerate our support of AMIS and, more generally, of the humanitarian relief effort in Darfur.

I am sure that we are clear why the United Nations has a right and duty to make this case to the Government of the Sudan. The scale of the disaster is already immense: 200,000 innocent people have died; almost 2 million have been displaced from their homes; nearly 3 million people in Darfur depend upon international aid for their survival, half a million being cut off from that aid by the fighting; and 50,000 more people have been displaced in the past couple of weeks. Imagine what further deterioration could bring. The regional implications — for Chad in particular — of the present crisis and the risk of a downward spiral are of obvious concern. We urgently need proposals to provide humanitarian assistance and security to the camps in eastern Chad.

The moral imperative for the international community to act, set out so eloquently by the Secretary-General in the Chamber last week, is clear. Every United Nations Member State at the Summit last year embraced the concept of the responsibility to protect. The Council affirmed it in a resolution drafted by the United Kingdom on the protection of civilians, which was adopted unanimously this spring and later recalled in resolution 1706 (2006), which was also drafted by the United Kingdom, three weeks ago.

This is first and foremost a responsibility for the State concerned to exercise, to protect its own citizens. It is clear that the Sudan is not protecting its people in Darfur, quite the contrary. In such cases the responsibility to protect means that the international community has a right to get involved, primarily in efforts to help the State concerned to carry out its responsibilities. That is what the United Nations has done in southern Sudan, and it is what we will all want to see happen in Darfur.

But our responsibility cannot end there if our offers of help are turned away. We cannot, in all conscience, allow the situation in Darfur to slide from crisis to catastrophe because of the ill-founded fears of the Government of Khartoum. We must therefore redouble our efforts — in the United Nations, the AU, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference — as friends of the Sudan and its peoples, to make clear the positive contribution the United Nations will make in Darfur, in full respect of the sovereignty of the Sudan and with a heavy African character to the force, as the Council has repeatedly made clear. We must also make clear the benefits of peace for the Sudan's Government and people in economic, political, security and humanitarian terms. The Sudan is a country with great economic resources. It should be an economic powerhouse, not a humanitarian crisis spot. And we should make clear that the responsibility for failures, increased conflict and death in Darfur will not rest with the United Nations, but with those responsible. It will be down to those who deny a United Nations peacekeeping force to the people of Darfur and who reject the offer of international support for the DPA and the sovereignty of the Sudan set out in resolution 1706 (2006). That is not a scenario that we want to realize; but it is a road that we may well have to travel if the Government of the Sudan does not relent in its opposition to the will and decisions of the international community.

The United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In Darfur, as in southern Sudan, peace, not war is in prospect. But, in Darfur in particular, that prospect now hangs by a thread, and if that thread snaps, the people of Darfur will pay a terrible price.

If our United Nations and this Council mean anything, we must make the effort to avert that. On 11 September this year, Kofi Annan asked the Council a question: "Can the international community, having not done enough for the people of Rwanda in their time of need, just watch as this tragedy deepens?" (*S/PV.5520, p. 3*). The answer to the question of the Secretary-General is a simple "no". If the Government of the Sudan is genuinely concerned about the welfare and protection of its citizens, there is no reason for it not to give its consent to a United Nations force.

For us today, it is not about saving face; it is about saving lives. We should make clear what the Sudan can expect from the international community if it shoulders its responsibilities in Darfur. And what it can expect if it does not. No one should doubt the international determination to see the conflict resolved.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jan

Pronk, for his comprehensive briefing, of which we would like to emphasize the following elements. First, the observations concerning the limited progress in the parties' fulfilment of their obligations under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement are not reassuring. We believe that further progress in key areas is necessary, such as with regard to the obligation to share power and wealth, especially as concerns oil.

We would also like to mention that legislation necessary to establish the national human rights, civil service, land and electoral commissions is still pending. At the same time, even though some of the various ceasefire bodies are working well and have had a significant role in the peaceful resolution of several incidents that have occurred, the authorities continue to impose restrictions on the activities of the monitors of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in Abyei, which constitute a clear violation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Those restrictions are among the instances of non-compliance with the commitments entered into by the Government in the status-of-forces agreement. Others include, for example, the arrest and detention of UNMIS national staff. We urge the authorities to fully comply with their commitments, and we urge the parties to implement fully, and not selectively, the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

We also urge the Government to immediately lift the restrictions imposed on humanitarian access, especially in the states of Kassala, Red Sea and Gedaref, and to coordinate with UNMIS the assistance necessary to relocate communities, in order to avoid a recurrence of incidents like the one that occurred in Dar Assalam on 16 and 17 August.

As Mr. Pronk indicated, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement has entered a new phase that is full of challenges, and substantial progress should be made in the areas of security-sector reform, police reform and restructuring and preparing for the return of internally displaced persons, the national census and future elections, while continuing active disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes to reduce the scourge of the grave problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. All of that, without any doubt, will contribute to bringing the population closer to realizing the benefits of the peace for which they have been hoping for so long.

However, that peace will be possible only if the entire country is at peace, once the critical situation that we are all aware of in Darfur ends in the framework of a lasting solution that is not based on coercion and violence.

The state of coma that Mr. Pronk has just described with regard to the Darfur Peace Agreement is of great concern. Mr. Pronk was very clear that it is necessary to support the forces of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), and that the Government of Khartoum must give its consent to the deployment to Darfur of United Nations forces as well — in other words, the immediate implementation of resolution 1706 (2006). We should not forget our responsibility to protect, and we must, therefore, respond.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement is the bedrock on which the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement must be built. It is necessary that both instruments enjoy the support of all parties, because they constitute negotiated political solutions of both conflicts. Only in that way will it be possible to leave behind conflict and instability and lay the foundations for a society based on equality and respect for human rights for all.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to thank Mr. Pronk for the briefing he has just given to the Council. In his briefing, as well as in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/728), we noted a number of encouraging points that I would like to mention at the outset, with respect to southern Sudan. The stability of the security situation and the humanitarian situation is a positive element, because without that, no progress would be possible. Yet we must not forget the stark situation in southern Sudan, as alluded to by the Special Representative, and the scope of the development challenges posed in that region.

Implementation of the security elements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is encouraging. In Juba last June, the Security Council mission noted the operation of the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee. The withdrawal of armed forces from certain areas where they had previously been deployed was generally done in accordance with the Agreement and constituted a step in the right direction.

With respect to the east, the holding of talks offers hope that there will be a peaceful resolution of the problems in that area, without, we hope, going

through the trials that other outlying areas of the country have had to endure.

Finally, we hope that the 26 August signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army will help improve the security situation for the people of the southern Sudan.

In spite of those elements, which we welcome, it is clear that the peace process in the southern Sudan remains very fragile. In addition to security questions, there has been considerable delay on a number of key elements of the Agreement — at least those on which there is not total deadlock. That is of even greater concern as those different areas, in particular the wealth-sharing and power-sharing, are issues that touch upon the root causes of the conflict.

I would like to recall that the United Nations has agreed to send troops to southern Sudan, in an effort that is not only large-scale, but also long-term. The timetable initially set out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement had a duration of more than six years. Thus, we must ensure that the effort will not continue indefinitely. Here, I would be grateful to Mr. Pronk if he told the Council whether — apart from the rescheduling of national elections from 2008 to 2009 — that timetable could be jeopardized by the current delays.

My delegation is sorry to note that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) continues to encounter a number of administrative difficulties, sometimes in spite of the terms of the status-of-forces agreement. It seems to us that eliminating those difficulties would be the first — and undoubtedly the simplest — measure that the Government of National Unity could take to accelerate the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Finally, my delegation would like to reiterate its very deep concern with respect to the situation in Darfur. In that regard, Mr. Pronk has described some disturbing developments and their consequences for the civilian population.

My delegation recently had an opportunity to tell the Security Council what its position is on the subject and, in particular, to emphasize the need to continue to make steadfast efforts, in particular with respect to the Sudanese Government, so that the United Nations will be able to take over from the African Union operation as quickly as possible in accordance with resolution 1706 (2006).

I would like to ask Mr. Pronk a question. We have noted the elements he set out regarding the very difficult situation with respect to the Darfur Peace Agreement, inter alia because a number of groups have not agreed to sign it. I would like to ask Mr. Pronk for some details on how, through the new discussions with the parties that he mentioned, those who did not sign the Darfur Peace Agreement could be persuaded to join it.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): I would like to thank Special Representative Pronk for his briefing here today and to thank the Secretary-General for his report dated 12 September 2006 (S/2006/728). That report shows that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and the wider United Nations system have played a key role in support of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The parties' efforts to implement the CPA's security provisions have reduced the likelihood of future conflict in southern Sudan. While there is still much to be done, the parties have shown they can continue to resolve long-standing problems through cooperation. That has been done in an atmosphere of security buttressed by United Nations peacekeepers.

In the coming days, it will be crucial for a similar de-escalation of conflict to occur in the Darfur area of Sudan as well. We deplore the ongoing violence in Darfur and the consequent deterioration of the humanitarian situation. At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the Security Council reiterate the need for the transition of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a United Nations operation consistent with resolution 1706 (2006) and with the precedent of resolution 1590 (2005).

Just as the Government of National Unity has shown itself able to overcome decades of violence in southern Sudan through respect for the CPA and cooperation with the United Nations peacekeeping mission, so should it be prepared to ensure a better future for its citizens in Darfur through respect for the Darfur Peace Agreement, through a strengthening of the AMIS operation and through cooperation in the deployment of UNMIS forces in Darfur.

This afternoon, we will circulate a draft resolution on the Sudan on which we plan to convene an experts meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, 19 September. The draft resolution will be to renew the mandate of UNMIS, set to expire 24 September, for a period of six months, so that we can ensure continuity of United Nations operations in the south. The draft resolution will also take into consideration the expansion of UNMIS through resolution 1706 (2006). It is critical that we expand these missions concurrently to ensure that urgent assistance to AMIS, as stipulated in resolution 1706 (2006), is not jeopardized.

In addition, I would like to call the attention of Council members to an invitation that was extended today by Denmark and the United States, at the request of our two foreign ministers, to invite the foreign ministers of Council members to a meeting of interested parties on the situation in the Sudan this Friday, 22 September, at 4 p.m. The Government of Denmark and the Government of the United States have invited ministers of all the members of the Council as well as the foreign ministers of Canada, South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda, the Netherlands, Chad, Norway, Egypt and Algeria. We very much hope that ministers will be able to attend.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Let me start by thanking Jan Pronk for his briefing, which was, as usual, a very eloquent and thorough update on the situation. The progress made by all parties in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), in particular in the area of security, is indeed very welcome. In this regard, I should like to recognize the important role played by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). We have also taken note of the reported difficulties and selectiveness in implementing the CPA, and we fully subscribe to the Secretary-General's statement that none of commitments enshrined in the CPA are optional. In particular, the lack of adherence to the CPA in respect of Abyei gives rise to concern. The expectation of peace dividends has yet to be met. That could seriously undermine popular support for the CPA, and it warrants our close attention and support in the coming months.

Sudan figures high on the agenda in New York this week. Unfortunately, that is due not to the progress made in implementing the CPA but, rather, to the extremely worrying situation in Darfur. This week, the African Union Peace and Security Council is meeting to discuss the future of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). We very much welcome the active dialogue that African leaders have pursued with President Al-Bashir over the past couple of days in Havana. We hope this week's intensified efforts will bear fruit and allow for the immediate and full implementation of resolution 1706 (2006).

Last week, the Council had two open meetings, where we heard alarming reports of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur, of military build-up, aerial attacks and the high risk of the Darfur Peace Agreement falling apart. I will not repeat the points I made during those discussions, but will limit myself to emphasizing the possible spillover to the south. There are already warning signs that further deterioration in Darfur will create difficulties in upholding the CPA and could potentially destabilize the relations between the north and the south.

The stakes are high for the government of Southern Sudan. We welcome President Kiir's recent statement of support for the deployment of United Nations troops in Darfur. This is indeed a challenge for the Government of National Unity to overcome.

This week provides a unique opportunity for the Government of the Sudan to trim down the public rhetoric, move forward and take the right decisions that will serve the interests of all Sudanese people.

The eyes of the world are set on New York in the coming days. Expectations are high for world leaders to do their utmost and to bring relief to the people of Darfur. We too will spare no efforts and, like Ambassador Bolton, I hope that all those invited to the meeting on Friday will be able to participate and that, through that meeting, as well as the other activities that are taking place in New York this week, we can all expedite the implementation of resolution 1706 (2006) and address the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

In closing, I would like to inform the Council that Denmark supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of UNMIS for an additional 12 months. At the same time, we expect to see an expansion of UNMIS operations to Darfur no later than 1 January 2007, as has already been decided by this Council.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We thank Mr. Pronk for his insightful briefing.

We welcome what must be a cautious optimism expressed regarding the implementation of the

Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). It is encouraging that the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly is meeting regularly, that 300 kilometres of roads have been cleared of mines, that 1.6 million children in southern Sudan are going to school and that 160,000 displaced persons returned to southern Sudan in the first part of this year. We want to commend the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) for its contribution to the creation of an environment that has made those developments possible.

We are concerned, however, that, despite the small amount of progress that is being made, it has not been possible to fulfil the parties' security commitments, and issues relating to wealth- and power-sharing and the demarcation of borders have not been resolved. We thus call for more diligent effort from both sides in meeting their obligations in implementation of the provisions of the CPA.

At this juncture, we must also express our concern at the continued restrictions being placed on UNMIS. This need not be the case.

There is no doubt that implementation of the CPA will impact on the peace process in Darfur. Without significant progress in implementation of the CPA, efforts to implement the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) will be curtailed. In the interest of the peoples of both southern Sudan and Darfur, we again urge the parties to the Agreement to work harder in all the tasks related to the CPA.

With regard to Darfur, we look forward to the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council at the summit level planned for Wednesday. We hope that the proposal to extend the AMIS mandate will be endorsed by the summit so that the strengthening of the forces provided for in resolution 1706 (2006) can go ahead.

It is, however, worth recalling that when the Abuja peace negotiations were under way, many around this table and elsewhere felt that they were taking too long. Mr. Pronk has suggested that even if they had taken one year the result would have been the same.

We believe that the Darfur Peace Agreement provides the basic framework for peace in Darfur. We want to caution against encouraging parties outside the framework to seek different accommodation, beyond the terms of the DPA. Our effort will be well served if we steer the parties towards respecting that Agreement and encourage them to seek accommodation under its terms. Thus we continue to urge the Government of the Sudan to accept the transformation of AMIS into a United Nations mission.

Tanzania has suffered the humiliation of colonialism. We vow never again to yield to colonialism. We cherish our sovereignty and guard it jealously. We therefore will never be privy to any efforts to colonize or recolonize any country. The transformation of AMIS to a United Nations mission is in the interest of the Sudan and her people. It is not an exercise to recolonize Sudan. It needs to happen, and urgently.

Ms. Tincopa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Pronk for his excellent presentation. We think that the information he has given us is very useful. We are concerned at hearing that the implementation of the commitments under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is stagnant or has made only very little progress. We would like to urge all parties involved to comply fully with their commitments under the CPA and not give priority to some to the detriment of others.

I think it is important that we start to work urgently on the issues of the sharing of power and wealth, which are the cornerstone of the Agreement. Another aspect that needs urgent political commitment is the Ceasefire Commission.

The Sudan is growing economically and is benefiting from the high price of oil. It is important that the Government develop a policy of total transparency in its handling of oil revenues and assume its primary responsibility of guaranteeing the development of all the people of the Sudan. That can be done through policies and programmes to fight poverty and in a framework of full respect for human rights.

We agree with what the Secretary-General's report says with regard to the fact that donors and the international community should support the people of the Sudan in facing the challenges of the peace process and provide financial, technical and political assistance to carry out the programme of the CPA.

It has been said that peace is indivisible. Some of the progress that has been made under the CPA could be severely affected if at the same time no progress is

made in implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). We appreciate and share the five conditions that Mr. Pronk has put forward to get the DPA out of its deep coma. We regret that the Government of the Sudan does not wish to understand that the goal of the peacekeeping operation in Darfur is nothing other than to work cooperatively with its authorities for the implementation of the peace and security agreements and for the protection of the population in Darfur, which at present is not protected at all.

Developments in the field show that this is urgent. The deterioration of security conditions and the restricted humanitarian assistance mean that millions of people are at great risk, on the border of a humanitarian crisis. In this context, it is important that the Security Council, the regional organizations and all interested countries continue to seek a way to convince the Government to implement rapidly resolution 1706 (2006), in particular to support effective implement of the DPA and protection of civilians.

We would also like to say that we support the Secretary-General's recommendation to renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

We have a question for Mr. Pronk regarding the lack of political will in the Ceasefire Commission. What are the details behind this, and why have the ceasefire commitments been constantly violated?

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I thank Mr. Pronk, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his informative and very useful briefing today. Japan commends the efforts of Mr. Pronk and his staff in the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to ensure respect for the ceasefire and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in the Sudan, and we shall continue to support their efforts. In this context, Japan will possibly consider the extension of the UNMIS mandate, as recommended by the Secretary-General and the draft resolution to that effect that the United States of America is circulating.

With regard to implementation of the CPA, we are gratified to note certain encouraging progress that has been made, including its security arrangements, such as the ongoing redeployment of the Sudan armed forces out of southern Sudan, the completed redeployment of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from eastern Sudan and implementation of other security mechanisms. On the other hand, it is a matter of concern that there have been considerable delays in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, security-sector reform and north-south border delineation issues. Concern must also be expressed over the lack of progress in implementation of the key issues such as those related to wealth-sharing and power-sharing. We would like to encourage the parties to make their utmost efforts towards progress in these areas.

On the question of Abyei, we have noted that the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement have agreed to seek a political solution. We would expect the discussions between the two parties to lead towards a final solution. On the other hand, the multiple restrictions imposed on the activities of UNMIS are a matter for concern, and the situation must be ameliorated without delay.

While the recent resurgence of activities by the other armed groups in southern Sudan poses a serious threat to security in the region, the agreement on the cessation of hostilities between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army — the result of the mediation efforts of the government of Southern Sudan — is certainly a positive step which, we hope, will contribute to improving security in southern Sudan.

With respect to the situation in the east, we are looking forward to the early conclusion of the ongoing peace negotiations under the auspices of the Government of Eritrea.

On Darfur, we fully share the view that the handling of the Darfur Peace Agreement has a direct impact on the stability of the Sudan as a whole, and we therefore support the way that UNMIS has been responding to African Union requests for assistance relating to communications, logistics, transportation, public information and humanitarian issues. We also welcome the fact that UNMIS is continuing its efforts to persuade the non-signatory groups to support the Darfur Peace Agreement and the immediate implementation of resolution 1706 (2006).

All of this is fine and commendable. However, the reality that the international community is confronting in Darfur and the fate of the Darfur Peace Agreement are, indeed, fairly grim and a matter of deep concern. Mr. Pronk described the Darfur Peace Agreement as being in a coma, and set out five essential conditions for saving it. He said, in part, that we need to de-link what should be done today to save

the Darfur Peace Agreement from tomorrow's actions to get a renewed and fully robust peace force on the ground. I would like to ask Mr. Pronk to elaborate on what he meant by that and to provide a little more detail. I would also like to ask him to share with us his views on what he calls the contours of a plan for the longer term on Darfur.

In closing, Japan shares the view expressed by the Secretary-General that continued assistance to the people of the Sudan is essential if we are to meet their expectations for a peace dividend under the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement. Japan has to date already fulfilled its commitment made at the Oslo conference in 2004 by disbursing more than $1 billion. Japan intends to consider possible additional assistance for the consolidation of peace, humanitarian reconstruction and development in the Sudan.

Mr. Li Junhua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Pronk, for his insightful briefing. We would also like to thank him for his efforts on behalf of the north-south peace process in the Sudan.

We would like to raise two points. First, with regard to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), in the years since its establishment, the Government of National Unity of the Sudan has, with the help of the international community, engaged in a serious manner in implementing that Agreement, and has made some progress. Although the situation is not fully to our liking, it is in general on the right track, and we appreciate that. At the same time, we hope that the north and the south of the Sudan will further enhance their confidence-building and cooperation efforts and fully implement the CPA.

We also welcome the fact that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) has almost completed its deployment there, having actively engaged in operations in accordance with its mandate as authorized by the Security Council. It has played a very important role in accelerating the implementation of the CPA and improving north-south reconciliation in the Sudan. We also support the extension of its mandate.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, the peace process in the Sudan has entered a challenging stage and urgently requires international financial assistance so that disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, refugee resettlement and national reconstruction programmes can be implemented. We join the Secretary-General in urging donors to fulfil their commitments to provide timely assistance for the process so that the people of the Sudan can benefit from the peace dividend of the CPA and so that there can be true peace.

I would also like to refer to the situation in Darfur. Earlier, Mr. Jan Pronk raised five points in connection with the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). We appreciate his comments. In our view, the issue of Darfur has an important bearing on the CPA. However, it is also important to note that the Darfur issue is different from the north-south issue and therefore calls for a different solution that nonetheless takes into account the resolution of the north-south issue.

The United Nations Mission in the Sudan has played a very positive role because it has the support and cooperation of the Government of the Sudan. The deployment of a United Nations mission to Darfur should be based on the same principle. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan is engaged in very important negotiations on that issue, and we hope that the Security Council will support it and cooperate where necessary. In particular, it should take effective measures to overcome the difficulties faced by the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). We appreciate the fact that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan will continue to provide technical and logistical support to AMIS, and support that effort.

China also believes that, as long as the various parties in the Sudan continue to act in a spirit of mutual understanding, trust and cooperation and implement the CPA and the DPA, and provided that the international community provides support, there will be peace and stability there.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): We would like to thank Mr. Pronk for his update today on the progress that has been made in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in the Sudan and on the situation in Darfur. My delegation commends the efforts of Mr. Pronk, as well as those of all United Nations staff in the Sudan, who are working tirelessly to help the people of the Sudan to attain peace and to build a better future.

We also acknowledge the key role played by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in

support of the CPA, and we welcome the progress made in implementing the Agreement so far. At the same time, we share Mr. Pronk's observation about the fragility of peace in the south of the Sudan and the necessity of keeping the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on course. We are concerned about the widening confidence gap resulting from the lack of progress in the implementation of several aspects of the CPA, including power- and wealth-sharing commitments under the Agreement.

Another worrying aspect is the continuing deadlock concerning the status of the Abyei area. In this regard, we call on all stakeholders to make progress, because this issue continues to undermine the CPA and is threatening the security of the whole region. We agree with Mr. Pronk that the issue can be considered a test case for the implementation of the entire CPA, and we call on the Government of National Unity to resolve the issue of the demarcation between the north and the south as soon as possible, so as not to jeopardize the chance of peace between the north and the south of the Sudan.

Another important priority for the United Nations in the south should be — and here we agree with Mr. Pronk — support for security-sector reform. We commend the role of UNMIS in this regard.

We support the Juba peace talks between Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the mediation role being played by the government of Southern Sudan. The signing on 26 August of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities was a positive development, and we hope that that trend will continue.

As Mr. Egeland told us on Friday (see S/PV.5525), Juba represents the best chance for peace in the region that we have had so far. We share the view that there can be no impunity for the crimes committed by the LRA. At the same time, however, it is crucially important that the peace process now continue and that it be shown that peace and justice can work together.

We welcome the improvement in the relations between the Sudan and Eritrea. In that regard, we would like to support the assistance provided by UNMIS in the talks between the Government of the Sudan and the Eastern Front. UNMIS should also be encouraged to support the efforts aimed at implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement as envisaged in resolution 1706 (2006). We regret that the position of the Sudanese Government has so far been negative. We fully agree with the observation made in the present report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/728) that, ultimately, the leaders in Khartoum bear full responsibility for the road that they ultimately choose.

Aware of the serious deterioration of the situation in Darfur, we believe that every effort should be undertaken to save the Darfur Peace Agreement and secure its full implementation. It cannot, however, be used as a pretext for attacking those who have not signed it. In our view, the only way to create favourable conditions for the peace process in Darfur is through a speedy transition to a robust United Nations-led operation able to cope with the complex situation on the ground. In that regard, we believe that all the provisions of resolution 1706 (2006) should be fully and expeditiously implemented.

We hope that the Sudanese Government will understand that active United Nations involvement in protecting civilians and facilitating the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement is in the best interests of all Sudanese people. We agree with Mr. Pronk that the long-term United Nations engagement in southern Sudan is the best proof that the Organization has no hidden agenda in the Sudan and that its only aim is to help the Sudanese people to establish a lasting and sustainable peace throughout the country.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We join in thanking Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for his comprehensive briefing. We note the progress made by the Sudanese parties in meeting their obligations under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, particularly in the area of security.

We undoubtedly see some positive momentum, but progress is very slow with regard to many aspects of the Agreement, and very little progress is being made in some important areas, including power-sharing and the sharing of revenues derived from natural resources, including oil exports. The issue of the north-south border has not yet been fully resolved. Of course, that is a complex matter. However, with active United Nations participation, we must make progress in these areas as soon as possible.

Of course, the Sudanese parties bear the primary responsibility in that regard. We have said on a number

of occasions that progress in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the north and the south would be assisted by the swift and effective resolution of conflict in other areas of the Sudan, particularly Darfur. We expect durable progress to be made soon in such areas, particularly eastern Sudan. We agree with the assessments made by the Secretary-General and Mr. Pronk in that regard.

With respect to Darfur, we noted with great interest the five elements that Mr. Pronk presented to the Security Council for consideration. In general, they appropriately reflect the issues that remain unresolved in the context of a Darfur settlement. It is clearly imperative that efforts be made to make the Darfur Peace Agreement as comprehensive as possible.

In that regard, I should like to ask Mr. Pronk what he believes will be the priority issues for future work with the Darfur parties that remain outside the Darfur Peace Agreement. The resolution of those issues will depend directly on the prospects for stabilization of the situation in Darfur. An important stabilizing role should be played by the African Union. We trust that its mandate will be extended beyond 30 September.

In that connection, my delegation very much looks forward to the meeting to be held in New York of the African Union Peace and Security Council. We hope that that meeting will be a success, both in terms of decisions to be taken regarding the future of African Union operations and in general with regard to the ongoing quest for a peaceful political and diplomatic solution to the Darfur crisis.

Following that meeting, the Security Council should probably meet once again to assess the situation on the basis of the decisions to be taken by the members of the African Union and the Sudanese parties.

Here, I wish to emphasize once again that, as my delegation has often stated both within and outside this Chamber, it is crucial to continue the constructive efforts and the dialogue with the Sudanese leadership in Khartoum to achieve a mutually acceptable settlement and to promote understanding of the United Nations peacekeeping role in Darfur. We see no alternative to that dialogue. We are well aware of the complexities of what the international community, including the United Nations, has undertaken in that regard, but the dialogue must continue. It is encouraging that the Secretary-General is carrying it forward and that he is in direct contact with the President of the Sudan.

Therefore, we expect that this effort of solidarity will have results that the Security Council will support with a view to reaching a prompt and comprehensive settlement in Darfur and throughout the Sudan.

Mr. Biabaorroh-Iboro (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Pronk for his comprehensive and enlightening briefing. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for submitting to the Council the report before us (S/2006/728), which makes it possible to follow the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the fulfilment of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) as envisaged in resolution 1590 (2005).

Although the report indicates that some progress has been made, it raises many worrisome issues. My delegation is concerned, to say the least, that the inordinately long wait for the dividends of peace will permanently dash the hopes of sorely afflicted populations, reignite the crisis and thus increase the people's suffering. We are seeing too much slowness. My delegation urges the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to resolutely implement all of its provisions, including with regard to the issue of power- and wealth-sharing.

My delegation is pleased at the work carried out by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and its support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with a view to promoting reconciliation between the parties, as well as its assistance to the African Union Mission in the Sudan. We regret that constraints have been placed upon its activities. Although security in southern Sudan has improved, the situation continues to be fragile because of the presence of armed groups and the circulation of weapons. We fear that this situation could jeopardize progress that has been achieved. The peace process under way in Darfur and in southern Sudan offers real opportunities that leaders in the Sudan should make the best of in order to ease the suffering of their people. My delegation also stresses that the Darfur-Darfur dialogue is an important element that aims at including all the parties in the implementation of the Agreement and at bolstering reconciliation. That process is essential for peace in Darfur.

In conclusion, I cannot fail to observe that rejecting a United Nations peacekeeping force and the withdrawal of UNMIS from the Darfur region pose an enormous risk; the international community cannot take such a risk, especially in the light of developments on the ground. We welcome the 26 August cessation of hostilities agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army. We hope that the agreement will help ease the suffering of the people in northern Uganda.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the mandate of UNMIS be renewed for 12 months, until 24 September 2007. We take note of the invitation just issued by the delegation of the United States of America.

Mr. Yankey (Ghana): I too wish to express appreciation to Mr. Pronk for his very illuminating assessment of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). That assessment indicates a mixed record of success and setbacks. It also shows what a United Nations mission can accomplish when the receiving State embraces it as a partner in solving problems. We look forward to the draft resolution being proposed by the United States and to its early adoption.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/728) clearly shows, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) is already lending critical support to the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). That confirms that the proposed expansion of UNMIS into Darfur is a logical, natural extension of what is already happening and is intended to enhance work that is already being done. So, I think the timely adoption of our resolution is very positive, and we call on all to cooperate.

The assessment that has been given is also very disturbing in some key aspects, particularly with regard to those parts of the CPA that seek to address the underlying causes of the conflict in southern Sudan. But the failures also show why the Darfur problem is so difficult to resolve, and perhaps why the Government of the Sudan is so vehemently opposed to the deployment of a United Nations mission.

To put it briefly, it seems to me that the Government of the Sudan must first take a certain strategic decision. That strategic decision is to accept all the ethnic groups in the Sudan as equal citizens, because that relates to the root cause of the conflict. We know clearly that that aspect of the CPA — the power-sharing, the wealth-sharing and the treatment of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) — has not worked. The constitutional review process, the legislative reform, the vital electoral laws: we have not made any progress there. And yet, they constitute the core of the power-sharing aspect of the Agreement.

With respect to wealth-sharing, we also know that there is a tussle between the National Petroleum Commission and the Ministry of Energy and Mining. Behind the technical manoeuvring, there is also the real problem of deciding what must go to whom. It is not just a technical or legal matter about who has the competence and so forth. Wealth-sharing is at the heart of the problem. The same applies to the boundaries — Abyei and the north-south boundary — as Mr. Pronk explained.

I would have liked not to make a linkage on a certain matter, but unfortunately, the facts cannot be interpreted otherwise. Here, I am talking about the treatment of the IDPs. We heard clearly what Mr. Pronk said: that sexual abuse is being used as a tool of war. How do we interpret the forced relocation of people in IPD camps? Why does UNMIS not have access to those people to find out what their needs are and then to stand up for them? Where are they? Are we to say that the bombing and the burning of villages are the first part of a strategy of confining people to the camps and then, later on, forcibly relocating them? I do not know, but that is what the facts on the ground suggest. We have to read those facts in the light of the power-sharing and wealth-sharing problems that have been highlighted in the report. For us, there can be no other interpretation, unless of course the Government of the Sudan can provide more information on that matter.

It is also obvious from the assessment given by the Special Representative that the Darfur Peace Agreement is falling apart, and not necessarily because some parties did not sign it, regrettable as that is. We do not make any excuses for the parties that did not sign the Agreement. But it is clear that they did not take up arms again and try to destabilize the situation; they simply did not sign the Agreement. Why did they not sign it? According to information available to us, they were not happy about two things: the wealth-sharing and the compensation. So, whichever way you go about it, you come back to core problem.

In conclusion, we are all very happy that the African Union and AMIS are playing a role. But let us not forget: what we are doing is not window-dressing. We are not interested in a window-dressing force that can be pushed around at will. We are interested in a force that can make a difference. If UNMIS was not even able to clear its communications equipment in eight months and is being restricted from certain parts of the Sudan, one may want to ask, concerning the proposed extension of the mandate of the mission, under what terms it is going to perform: what size and what mandate? Are they going to have unrestricted access? These are not issues we should gloss over, because these issues will make the difference between an UMIS that is able to perform on the one hand and business as usual on the other. We know that the presence of UNMIS has not made much of a significant difference in the situation in Darfur. So, as we consider what to do between now and 1 January, we should also not overlook the issues that I have highlighted: the size, the mandate and the question of access for UNMIS.

And finally, who is going to be accountable? War crimes have been committed, and they continue to be committed. That cannot be glossed over. What my delegation has been insisting on, particularly in the African context, is that all countries must be treated equally. What is bad in Côte d'Ivoire is bad in the Sudan. Today, Charles Taylor is languishing in jail. What is going to happen to those who have committed serious war crimes in the Sudan?

We do not have the answers, but these are not issues that we are prepared to sweep under the carpet.

Mr. Al-Qahtani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank Mr. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for the efforts he and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) have made to bring about the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We commend the parties to the Agreement for their efforts to implement it, and the considerable progress made in the sharing of power and wealth. Still, some problems remain, which the parties should deal with in order to achieve security and stability and the welfare of their people. I encourage the United Nations Mission, and we agree with what Mr. Pronk said, that the redeployment of UNMIS to other regions such as Darfur would have dire consequences for peace in the south and for the fate of UNMIS.

As Mr. Pronk said, the presence of the African Mission in Darfur is a main and crucial element and cannot be disposed of. It could be strengthened by other units and other forces, and, consequently, we must keep that force to keep peace and security in Darfur. We all hope that the African Union Peace and Security Council will extend the mandate of AMIS in Darfur until it accomplishes the mission and the tasks for which it was set up. We reaffirm our support, through the League of Arab States, by providing all the necessary financial support and the support of the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference for the efforts of the African Union in Darfur. However, those efforts will not achieve their objectives without the United Nations, especially the Security Council.

In brief, we should deal with the situation in Darfur objectively and transparently, and we should avoid political arrogance, racial and ethnic allegations, political hypocrisy and double standards. We now know that it is the rebel movements that present obstacles to the peace efforts in Darfur. They should be punished, in consonance with Security Council resolutions, because this Council has not dealt firmly with the violations committed by members of the rebel movements. That encourages those who are against the Agreement to escalate their violence in order to erode the DPA. We therefore should deal with them firmly, and not continue to blame the Sudanese Government when it tries to repel aggression in the protection of its national security and territorial integrity. We hope to know Mr. Pronk's views with regard to that matter and how we might tackle it.

We agree with the representative of the United Kingdom that the Government of the Sudan must provide security for its citizens in Darfur. However, the protection of civilians, if performed by the Sudanese Government, would be considered, as some said, a violation of resolution 1590 (2005). Once again, what solution could Mr. Pronk provide in answer to this question and this contradiction?

We hope that we do not close the door to dialogue with the Sudanese Government, and that we refrain from taking impractical steps or do not stymie the efforts being undertaken by other international actors, especially the Secretary-General, with the Government of the Sudan.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity in my national capacity.

I would like first to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Pronk, for his comprehensive statement on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), as well as on the situation in Darfur. The conclusion that one draws from the Secretary-General's recent report is that the implementation of the CPA has slowed, and that although there is notable progress with regard to security arrangements, the same cannot be said about the provisions for sharing power and wealth.

We welcome the fact that the Government has deployed its forces from southern Sudan and that accordingly the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has completed its redeployment from eastern Sudan. We encourage both sides to show the same resolve in the formation of joint integrated units. It is also encouraging that the economy of the country is booming and that finally the economy of the south is starting to reap the rewards of peace, after years of war and deprivation. Of course, there is still a lot that has to be done, and the funds promised by the international community must arrive sooner rather than later.

On the negative side, the issue of Abyei, the proper functioning of the National Petroleum Commission, the non-establishment of human rights commissions, the insecurity in the south because of the presence of other armed groups, and the non-existent preparations for national elections are just some of the obvious examples of the slow implementation of the CPA.

Notwithstanding these issues, we believe that the key element that will ultimately define the future of the CPA is the gradual consolidation of a spirit of cooperation and trust between the two parties. In that regard, there is still much ground to be covered.

With regard to Darfur, we agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that peace in Sudan is indivisible. The crisis in Darfur, if not resolved soon, may have a spillover effect in the rest of the country. We once again call for the full implementation of resolution 1706 (2006) by all sides and for the upholding of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). In addition, allowing humanitarian access to the people in need is of pivotal importance. I wish to emphasize that we all must work collectively to address the present crisis for the benefit of all the people in Sudan and the region as a whole.

I also wish to ask Mr. Pronk what is the best action the Council could take to have all the parties involved sign the DPA in order to bring peace to the country. At the same time, I would like to thank Denmark and the United States for their initiative regarding a meeting next Friday.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Pronk to comment on questions that have been raised.

Mr. Pronk: There was a question concerning the south, which is, of course a question concerning the country as a whole. It concerned the elections provided for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. There is no concrete reason to expect that they will not take place. However, nobody is preparing for them. We need a census before elections, and preparations for the census are lagging so far behind that it will be a big problem to have the elections take place in time. It is being discussed politically at the moment; so far it is not being discussed in the institutions. We are preparing for elections within our mandate, but we cannot organize or start elections; we can only facilitate and support them.

I thank delegations for their questions concerning Darfur. They all related to what I said about the short-term plan, the delinking and the longer run. Let me try to focus on these three issues.

First, members of the Security Council will remember that for the short run — and this means between now and the end of the year — I said to broaden the basis of support and secure a truce, because there is more and more fighting at the moment. Reform the Ceasefire Commission, get a better Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and avoid a collision course.

The question was addressed to me of how the Ceasefire Commission came about. Agreement was reached on 9 May. When we got the mandate for the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) from the Security Council in resolution 1590 (2005) of 24 March 2005, I instructed the UNMIS Commander to call for the first meeting of the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) on 24 March — right away. The Ceasefire Commission did not meet after the signing of the DPA. It was postponed and postponed and

postponed. That was the first major blunder. There were no meetings — but there were violations. The Minni Minawi faction attacked the Abdul Wahid faction, and it later withdrew; there was conflict between G19 and the Government. None of these violations were ever addressed: there was no meeting. So the message was that you can violate without being sanctioned. This was exactly the same situation as in the Ceasefire Commission after the N'djamena Ceasefire Agreement of 8 April 2004. The whole idea was to build something new. But it was not new; it was the same. That was the first problem.

The second problem was that after they started meeting, six weeks later, the two signatories, the Government and Minni Minawi, were brought together, and they became allies. They said that all the others should first sign and then they could join. So you had ceasefire violations of the previous agreements as well, which had been signed by Abdul Wahid and others. They could not be discussed at the meeting, because half of the parties to the fight were not allowed to be present. You are being attacked, but you must sign first and then you can participate in the meeting. Of course, they did not do this.

I presented six options to solve the problem: subcommittees, et cetera. They were all rejected.

The DPA says that Darfur should be brought into a system of demilitarized zones, buffer zones and neutral zones. This zoning should be done by the Ceasefire Commission. There was no zoning exercise whatsoever. It ought to have started before a specific deadline. The deadline meant nothing anymore. Every deadline was simply shifted aside. There was no zoning. Instead of the zoning, which ought to have been based on the status quo on the date of the signing, parties started to increase their own zones by fighting. And they could do so, because nobody said that it should not be done or that it was a violation: they did not meet, or if they met, the issue could not be raised by the parties because they themselves were doing it.

The Janjaweed disarmament plan is, of course, the most important thing, but the word has hardly been mentioned. It was presented by the Government — late — but at least there was a plan. That plan should have been discussed, addressed and approved — or disapproved and then improved through the Ceasefire Commission. It has not been discussed so far in the Commission. But it is the most important issue.

The United Nations is only an observer. I myself was in Abuja in order to get the United Nations as a member, but the international community was not interested. So we are an observer. I send my Deputy Force Commander, who is not just any person, to the Commission meetings — assuming they take place. Very often, when he arrives by plane at Al-Fashir, they say "Oh, the meeting is not taking place; it has been postponed because the Government is not yet ready", or whatever. This has happened four times. If the meeting takes place and if he raises an issue, he is silenced. The United States, also an observer at the Commission, is also being silenced. The European Union, as a member, does not protest against the silencing of the United Nations in the Ceasefire Commission.

The Commission is dead in its present form. I am withdrawing my Deputy Force Commander from the meetings, because he cannot speak anyway. He is not allowed to raise issues. That is the answer to the question.

The Ceasefire Commission has to be reformed, renewed, to make it independent and fully representative for everybody who is fighting to get a ceasefire. And it must be authoritative, as the CJMC is in the south: it has had dozens of meetings. Parties come, and they fight in the meetings. That is definitely what you have to do. But then they reach a kind of conclusion, and we see implementation. We send our monitors through the whole of south Sudan, and they raise issues. The system is tripartite, and if one of the parties does not show up for some reason, we leave. In the Ceasefire Commission, the parties can say, "Well, we do not have monitors". That is not a tripartite system. The monitors cannot go to see, question and investigate what is going on in Darfur. The Ceasefire Commission is also in a coma. That is the answer.

It has to be improved and renewed. Otherwise, fighting and violations will continue, and nothing will be implemented. This means that you also have to bring all the other groups into the Ceasefire Commission. Some of them did not want to sign, but they did not fight. They said that they would abide by previous agreements, from N'djamena onwards. We had quite a number of agreements, and they did abide. One did not — a new group, the New Redemption Front (NRF) — and they carried out an attack in West Kordofan. That was truly a very bad start to the month of July. But, as I said, since then they are constantly

being attacked. Now it is an all-out war between the Government and that new movement.

You have to talk with them: they have power, they have weapons, and they want to talk. But if all you do is to tell them that they must first stop and then can join, it is not going to happen, whether you like it or not. And the aim, of course, is to achieve peace on the ground.

Bring all of them on board — in the Ceasefire Commission and in all the other committees. The more you say that they should stay out of all the institutions of the DPA, the more the constituency of all these groups will lose faith in the DPA. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy at the moment. That is why you have to broaden this process.

This also means that although the DPA is a good text in itself, you have to start talking again, and you have to find a way to start talking without calling the talks a re-opening. Such a diplomatic trick can always be found. But you must add a number of issues without reducing what is in the DPA. What are some of those issues? The representative of Ghana mentioned compensation and wealth. As for compensation, I definitely agree. It is a small amount of money. Thirty million dollars for, I would say, 2 million refugees and internally displaced persons is not enough. But in the DPA it is said that the initial figure is $30 million. So if you raised it to $200 million, bringing us to a reasonable amount of money per family, even in their own view, you would not violate the DPA because it only said "initially" $30 million. So you can be creative; you could easily use some of the international money designated as reconstruction funds, for example, for a purpose like this.

Secondly, how can we bring about further improvement? I think Minni Minawi should, with his faction, take a step backwards. He occupies many positions: he is Senior Assistant to the President and Chair of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority as well — if it starts. He has it all. To bring the others on board, put international pressure on him to take a step backwards in order to give others some room. It might be helpful. That is not a violation of the DPA because nowhere does it say that one person should have all those positions. It could be done differently. You could play with the numbers with regard to the groups in the councils: instead of 20, make it 25 and so forth. Playing with the numbers merely to renegotiate some other numbers without really changing the overall agreement is always possible. This is also face-saving for leaders of those other movements, who have to inform their own constituencies that some talks have taken place and that they got something, so that it is now really worthwhile to sign the agreement.

Then, of course, there is the disarmament of the Janjaweed. The representative of Ghana is quite right that money is important for these people. However, the most important reason why the people on the ground do not believe in the DPA is their fear of the Janjaweed. That is the overriding issue. If you go into the field — to the Jebel Marra or the camps — the people always ask, "What about the Janjaweed and the DPA?" They will do anything to stop the Janjaweed. It is true. The Government says that it is not true, but there are indications that quite a number of the Janjaweed have been incorporated into the security force. That may be good or not good. It is a specific way to disarm. In any case, the people on the ground, who have always said that everything is one and the same body, think that this is still the case. This is extremely important. In order to get the people to accept the DPA, the Janjaweed should be stopped. And that is not happening — the contrary is true.

This brings me to the question of the de-linking. I use that word for a number of reasons. De-link what you have to do today from what you have to do tomorrow. I use today and tomorrow nearly literally. Today we must address these points, which I have mentioned, relating to broadening, a truce and reform of both the Ceasefire Commission and the DPA. Why the need for de-linking? The most important thing is peace on the ground. You get a peace agreement in order to facilit... a peace on the ground, and you get a robust international force in order to monitor a good peace agreement. Make the robust force the instrument, not the objective. It is an instrument to reach an objective.

This year, understandably, nearly all of the talk was about the force, the robust force, and the specific form of the force. But had to be done on the ground in order to get the people behind the peace agreement gradually receded beyond the horizon.

De-link: support the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). AMIS can be a good force; they were in the beginning. They are less so at the moment for quite a number of reasons. Do not ask me to elaborate.

Support for AMIS can, of course, be made conditional upon the transition, but then you do not de-link it. A very strong force must be on the ground as soon as possible in order to protect the people. If supporting AMIS is dependent on the acceptance of the transition, the force will be postponed because the transition will not be easily accepted.

So de-link, and do it. Make the force as robust as possible. That is the terminology I have always used in the Council, without saying that it should be from the African Union or from the United Nations. Members will remember the terminology that I have always used: Robust, strong, big and broad. Broad mandates like the one outlined in resolution 1706 (2006), which is a good, broad mandate, are better mandates for a force than previous mandates. A bigger force must be mandated — 17,000 or 18,000 — and it must be deployed everywhere.

Regarding the discussions on the transition, I ask members to accept my advice from the field; they have the right to my advice. Resolution 1706 (2006) "invites" (*para. 1*) the Government to give its consent to the transition. The Council said under the presidency of the United Kingdom that there would be consultation and that there would not be any force against the consent of the Government. This means that the Council will have to acquire that consent. It will not acquire that consent by repeating that they have to consent. That is not politics. So, make it attractive. Everybody thinks at the moment that the next meeting between a specific aide from one country and a diplomat from another country will perhaps create that consent. It will not. The underlying factors at the moment have to be analysed. Why does the Government of the Sudan not give its consent? Whether you like it or not, analyse the underlying factors.

The Government of the Sudan bears responsibility for devilish, atrocious acts, especially in 2003; less now, but in particular during the past. Let me play devil's advocate. The Council must understand Khartoum. How does one get their consent? Either one must make the offer attractive in the present situation, or in some other way.

First, here is how to make it attractive. A consultation — a negotiation, because they are an equal partner — might also result in a package, whereby they accept the transition and they get, for instance, commitments: economically, debt relief; trade, lifting of the sanctions; security, staying in power and security cooperation. The Government of the Sudan is anti-United Nations and anti-West in terms of peacekeeping, not only because they are angry, but also because there is fear of radical groups which will attack the Government itself. The beheading of Mr. Taha, the likes of which was certain to happen eventually, as a signal, is a phenomenon that has spread fear throughout Khartoum.

There are groups that will attack the Government if the Government says "yes" to the big Powers of the world. Those groups are there and are coming, so there is also some legitimate fear. Devilish things have happened in Africa, but you have to negotiate. You have to analyse the underlying structural forces — I just mentioned some of them — in order to get consent. You must try, rather than just say you have to accept. It does not work.

If you study all the statements made by all the leaders in the Sudan since about 10 February, they have been consistent. You cannot accuse the Government of the Sudan of not having been very clear and consistent. It says no, and it gets more and more support for that "no". Even the friends of the United Nations and the friends of the CPA — Vice-President Taha was here in this Chamber a year ago — have made a very clear anti-transition statement. Those who are in favour of the transition in the Sudan have no power whatsoever. Mini Minawi is used up. He has no power. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement speaks but will not make it a political issue, and the Government's opposition — the other parties — do not have the people on the streets, and the Government knows that.

The consent will not be given very easily, so we have to talk, even with people who have carried out or were responsible for atrocious things in the past. I think it would be wise to think ahead. If the Government does not accept the invitation — "accept the invitation" is the language used — it might be useful to begin thinking ahead already, because to ask every time for another month of the presence of the African Union is not in the interests of the people over there. They are scared in Darfur.

There are, of course, also other options. You can define transition. What type? The Security Council has the right to my advice, even if it is not exactly the same language which it has laid down in the resolution.

Chapter VIII is difficult, I know, but Chapter VIII is a possibility. It is a possibility on the basis of the Charter. The Government, I am certain, will accept Chapter VIII. It has made that clear already.

Another possibility is major support, financed out of the United Nations budget, not by going around from one capital in the North to another capital in the North to beg. Major United Nations structural support for the African Union in order to make it really effective is also a possibility. I think the Government would accept that — an African Union force, but very strongly embedded in United Nations support that is secured for the long run, with all the expertise necessary, but still called an African Union force. That would be a face-saving device for the Government of the Sudan. It comes close to what I proposed to the Security Council one and a half years ago at the same meeting — a joint African Union/United Nations operation.

That is only plan B. It would come into effect only after the invitation is not accepted, but at a certain moment I think it will be necessary, given the present political configuration, to think about what is possible and, at the same time, effective. We have been very disappointed by the African Union over the past couple of months, and what I have said about the Ceasefire Commission adds to that, because it is being led by the African Union. But it is not inherently weak; it can be much better. It can be helped, also, to be much better, as it was in the last couple of months of 2004 and in 2005. It can be improved again.

Predictions for the longer run, very briefly, only make sense if, in the short term, such changes are accepted. Secondly, it is extremely important to deal with the root causes of the problem in Darfur, so we have also to talk with the people — Arabs, Arab tribes, nomads — whose interests are also at stake. If they do not think that their interests are going to be preserved, that is again a source of conflict. That has to be addressed in the Darfur-Darfur dialogue. The preparations and the whole dialogue have not yet started. It is necessary to do that as soon as possible with all groups, not only those that have taken sides, and particularly with the others that would find a reason to continue to use their weapons rather than to find a solution that is related to other land-tenure systems and to the sharing of water. All those issues have to be brought into that framework.

I wish it would have been possible for the United Nations to lead the Darfur-Darfur dialogue. I have always asked, in our internal discussions, for the United Nations to be given the political lead on Darfur and the African Union the military. The Darfur-Darfur dialogue would have been different.

We must also deal with reconciliation. It is extremely important. The tribal dimension in Darfur is underrated in its effect and its importance. There are major tribal problems. I can say, for instance, that in July the biggest number of casualties — people dead — were not the result of attacks by the parties on civilians; 150 people were killed because of a tribal conflict that was not related in any way to the war in the South Sudan. As is so often the case, dozens upon dozens of deaths are the results of tribal conflict. It is underestimated. It has to be brought together; it is all related to economic, land, water and other specific issues.

We have also to discuss returns and to set an example — not an overall return for each and every body at the same time, but a start to the process regionally, locally, in order to show, with the help of protective forces, that it does work and that those people can go back and start to produce their own food again, so that confidence is built gradually.

I would give that process a number of years. Darfur and the addressing of the root problems cannot be solved in a year or two. It will take as many years as we are giving to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan in the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. That is at least seven years.

The President: I thank Mr. Pronk for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no more speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5529

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5529th meeting

Wednesday, 20 September 2006, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Bakoyannis	(Greece)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Taiana
	China	Mr. Li Zhaoxing
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Moeller
	France	Mr. Douste-Blazy
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Belaunde
	Qatar	Sheikh Al-Thani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovakia	Mr. Kubiš
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Howells
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Migiro
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Letter dated 6 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2006/719)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-52873 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Letter dated 6 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2006/719)

The President: As agreed in prior consultations, the Security Council is pleased to invite His Excellency Mr. Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, to participate in this meeting in accordance with rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure.

As agreed in prior consultations, the Security Council is pleased to invite the following representatives of regional organizations to participate in this meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure: Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, representing the Presidency of the European Union; Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States; Mr. Lauro L. Baja, Chairman of the New York Committee of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States; Mr. Karel de Gucht, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; Mr. Vladimir Rushaylo, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States; Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Mr. Nikolai Bordyuzha, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization; and Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/590, which contains the report of the Secretary-General entitled "A regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities".

I should also like to draw the Council's attention to document S/2006/719, which contains a letter dated 6 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Greece addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a background paper on the item under consideration.

I wish to welcome the presence at this meeting of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Allow me to open this debate with the following introduction in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his presence here today. We greatly appreciate his tireless efforts to bring increasing significance to the issue of the relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining peace and security. We fully share his stated vision of a mutually reinforcing regional-global mechanism for peace and security, which, in our view, will prove critical to effectively addressing future threats and security challenges in the twenty-first century. We strongly urge the next Secretary-General to continue those efforts and to further strengthen that partnership.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the representatives of regional organizations for being here today to share with us their views and experiences on this most important subject.

This debate provides a good opportunity to discuss the developments that have taken place recently in implementing resolution 1631 (2005), which was adopted last year under Romania's presidency of the Council. But most importantly, this meeting can stimulate an interesting discussion on the vision of creating a regional-global security mechanism. The report of the Secretary-General in response to resolution 1631 (2005) identifies challenges and opportunities to make the relationship with regional organizations more effective, and paves the way for the construction of a mechanism that will enable the world community to handle future threats and challenges in a more consistent and coordinated way. For our part, we would like to raise three issues that are relevant to the findings and recommendations of the report.

First, in previous Security Council debates it was recognized that, given the nature of the new security threats, greater involvement by international organizations in conflict prevention and management, in cooperation with the Council, was required. We fully subscribe to that position. We believe that a greater role by regional agencies in the area of peace and security would not only lessen the burden of the Security Council in that field, but it would also increase the legitimacy of the Council through more balanced input into its decisions and deliberations from various regions with different cultural, religious and historical backgrounds.

Secondly, many important developments have taken place in this regard, particularly through the Secretary-General's convening of six high-level meetings that have been marked by a high level of attendance and [a] broadened substantive agenda. The meetings have identified an important set of modalities for cooperation on conflict prevention and for guiding principles in the area of peacebuilding. It is now important to ensure that there is more effective implementation of those principles in close coordination between the United Nations and international organizations.

For its part, the Security Council has conducted its own meetings with regional organizations and has developed an enhanced relationship with regional and subregional organizations, focusing on peace and security challenges such as conflict prevention and management, peacebuilding and counter-terrorism.

However, despite those developments, many challenges remain to be addressed to make this relationship more substantive and operational. While Chapter VIII of the Charter refers to regional agencies and arrangements and sets forth the functional relationship with the Security Council — in Articles 52 and 53 — it is silent with regard to their constitutional relationship with the Security Council. We believe that the time has come for greater clarity as regards a series of issues that will facilitate the shaping of the vision of a global-regional mechanism for peace and security agreed by both the Security Council and the regional organizations.

We need to identify regional and subregional agencies and to clarify the criteria on the basis upon which those agencies are distinguished, for the purpose of applying Chapter VIII of the Charter, from other international organizations. Such clarity will give real meaning to the envisaged global-regional mechanism, and should restore more authority to the Security Council and greater reliance on constitutionally delegated executive functions to genuine regional agencies under Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The importance of this issue has been identified in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/590), prepared in response to resolution 1631 (2005), which emphasizes the need to clarify both the membership and the mandate of regional and other organizations, to make coordination more effective and ensure a clearer collective effort. We endorse his recommendations on that issue. In that respect, we have suggested in our concept paper some basic elements to be applied for the potential identification of regional and other organizations. We also support all other recommendations contained in the report.

In conclusion, I would like to express our full support for all the efforts aiming at building the capacity of regional and other organizations. The United Nations and Member States should promote the capacity-building of those organizations through the provision of human, technical and financial assistance if they really wish to develop an effective partnership. In that respect, the seventh high-level meeting that will take place immediately after this meeting, to which I have been invited as President of the Council to report on the findings and decisions of the Council, will focus on the implementation of the 10-year process of sustained capacity-building for African regional and subregional organizations. We are looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations contribution to that effect, in accordance with the World Summit Declaration.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now invite the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, to make a statement.

The Secretary-General: I pay tribute to the delegation of Greece and to you in particular, Madam Foreign Minister, for convening this meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. The fact that the Security Council has met twice on this issue in as many years shows the importance it rightly attaches to it.

Last October, in its first resolution on the subject, resolution 1631 (2005), the Council expressed its determination to further this cooperation, and asked me to report on the challenges and opportunities in this area. My report is now before the Council in document S/2006/590, and I am pleased to have this chance to supplement it with some further thoughts.

It is now 14 years since the Council invited my predecessor to submit recommendations for strengthening the United Nations in the field of international peace and security, including our collaboration with regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter. Since then, my predecessor and I have convened six high-level meetings with the heads of partner organizations. A seventh, as the Council has heard from the President, is to be held shortly.

Those meetings are helping to build a common forum and an agenda of cooperation. The partnership is stronger today than in the early 1990s; many of the regional and subregional partners themselves are stronger; our interaction is more intense, substantial and meaningful. This year alone, our political and operational collaboration has included: cooperation with the African Union's peacekeeping operation in the Sudan; cooperation with the European Union in support of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and ongoing partnerships with the Economic Community Of West African States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Afghanistan and Kosovo, and the Organization of American States in support of Haiti's electoral process.

We are also engaged in regular consultations with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States on conflict resolution in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Our mediation and other efforts include partnerships with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Somalia and Sudan, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Cambodia, Myanmar and Timor-Leste, the International Organization of La Francophonie in the Central African Republic, and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in Guinea-Bissau.

That is just a sample of the wide-ranging policy and operational activities that are taking place. Those diverse experiences span conflict-prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building. They are delivering results on the ground, as well as lessons for the future.

We have a better sense today of our respective strengths and advantages. The political engagement of regional actors is improving our knowledge of specific situations. Their military and peacekeeping capacities have made it possible to respond more quickly at the outset of a crisis and at key moments. Their resources are proving to be a linchpin of post-conflict peace building. My report contains specific suggestions for building on this growing knowledge of each other's strengths.

Much as we have strengthened our capacities over the years, it is essential that we do even more. The 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union is making progress, primarily because it has brought together, with a great sense of purpose, all relevant regional and subregional, in-area and out-of-area actors. With that example in mind, my report sets out a number of concrete recommendations for furthering this and other capacity-building efforts.

We sometimes forget how quickly our world evolves. Not too long ago, the idea of more than 90,000 United Nations peacekeepers in the field, of an African standby force, or of a European Union police mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was unthinkable. They are reality today.

Likewise, the breadth of our involvement in mediation efforts, the growing awareness of the fragility of post-conflict situations and the increased emphasis on prevention have also been major features in our work. The reality of the next decade is that the demand for peacekeeping and these other services will continue to grow and we must be ready.

That means the time has come for us to take the regional-global partnership to a new level of clarity, practicality and seriousness. Chapter VIII exists for reasons that are as valid today as they were 61 years ago. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations offers a framework for doing this with the requisite flexibility, accountability and legitimacy. I welcome, therefore, the deepening engagement of regional organizations in United Nations efforts for peace and security, and urge us all to continue to keep thinking of new ways — new ways to our cooperation and to the creation of a global collective security mechanism that protects people and lays the groundwork for lasting peace.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached among the Council members, I wish to remind all the speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking to the Chamber. I shall give the floor now to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, Madam President, let me express our appreciation for the outstanding performance of Greece, your friendly country, in its tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and for the constructive work it has been undertaking in the fulfilment of the purposes and principles aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our thanks go also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the tireless efforts he has been making in the context of enhancing the partnership between the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and other international organizations in the interest of achieving lasting peace and security.

Madam President, from your ancestors, the ancient Greeks, we learned the meaning of the word "democracy", meaning the rule of the people. It is a word that connotes the objective of the advancement of humanity. It is therefore no surprise to witness today the manifestation of your desire to develop a more effective partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, with a view to promoting democracy in international affairs.

We, the peoples of the United Nations, have underscored in our Charter, which we all have accepted as our ultimate authority, our desire to achieve peace and security. Convinced as we are of the importance of coordinated action in this great international Organization, we have established regional and subregional alliances as well as broader international political arrangements based on shared political and economic orientations in order to strengthen the foundations of sustainable peace and security.

That is only natural in a diversified world of escalating tensions. Consolidating a collective approach in which security issues are dealt with by the United Nations and regional organizations contributes to the promotion of peace and security, especially in the light of the leading role that can be played by regional and subregional organizations in the area of peacemaking, since they are better placed to determine the best way of dealing with conflicts in their own regions. This has prompted the United Nations to accord greater interest to enhancing a relationship of partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations and to consider the development of a common vision of a global structure in which capacities complement each other on the basis of comparative advantages and a clear division of labour.

The activities undertaken by the regional organizations must be accorded due importance in the United Nations, particularly if we take into account the role played by such regional organizations. Such a role is presumed to be the strongest link between the national and international levels in the context of collective action aimed at developing specific concepts that all States Members of the United Nations can abide by. It is to be noted that interaction between the United Nations and a particular regional organization strengthens the role played by that organization in its regional context and vice versa.

While it is axiomatic that the basis for human welfare in different regions may be similar in principle, at the same time different approaches are required in dealing with each situation according to its own specificities. There is no doubt that the cooperation and partnership that are beginning to emerge between the United Nations, especially the Security Council, and the African Union represents the strongest evidence of the great potential that can be tapped by this kind of cooperation as well as the great advantage to be gained in the maintenance of sustainable peace and security. We believe that the recent historic visit by a Security Council delegation to the African Union Commission provides further impetus for modalities of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

However, there remain major, often politically motivated distortions that result in the application of double standards in dealing with various conflicts and the regional organizations that could play a constructive role in such conflicts. This causes a certain imbalance between global collective security and regional collective security. The unstable situation

in our Arab region is but proof of this imbalance, which must urgently be corrected.

It is our view that the United Nations has a great capacity to achieve the lofty objective of a partnership that would reflect equally and fairly the concerns and preoccupations of the various regional organizations, in pursuit of the greater objective of such a partnership.

Madam President, in conclusion, we would like to assure you of our support for the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the end of this meeting. Allow us to extend our best wishes for the success of the seventh high-level meeting between the United Nations, the regional organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, scheduled to begin its work soon.

The President: I call on Mr. Li Zhaoxing, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

Mr. Li Zhaoxing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam President, I am very pleased to see you presiding over today's meeting, and I wish to congratulate Greece on the outstanding job it has done since assuming the presidency of the Security Council.

The United Nations is the core of the international collective security mechanism, and the Security Council shoulders the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. At a time when the security interests of countries are increasingly inter-connected in the face of growing global security threats, China supports enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional, subregional and other intergovernmental organizations with a view to safeguarding international peace and security.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently submitted his report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. China in principle endorses the analyses and recommendations presented in the report, and supports the development of an effective global partnership. In that regard, I wish to make three points.

First, it is important for all bodies involved to complement each other's efforts and enhance coordination among them. China welcomes the contribution of regional and subregional organizations to the maintenance of peace and security in their respective regions as well as their contribution to world peace and security, drawing fully on their experiences and advantages in addressing issues in their respective regions under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

We support the establishment of the basic principles underlying this partnership, which should ensure that the United Nations plays a leading role. In their cooperation efforts, the actors involved should bring into full play their comparative strengths, complement each other's efforts rather than duplicate them, and reinforce rather than compete with each other.

Regional organizations should, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, submit timely and comprehensive reports to the Security Council on relevant activities they have undertaken.

Secondly, it is important to promote a results-oriented cooperation. The United Nations should cooperate with regional organizations based on their comparative strengths and unique characteristics in such areas as confidence-building, conflict prevention, crisis management and peacekeeping. Such cooperation should be flexible and varied and should not be confined to a particular modality or mechanism. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission marks a new phase in the work of the United Nations in this area. We support the active participation of relevant regional organizations in that Commission.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen capacity-building. Enhancing crisis-response capacity at the regional level is the best way to end or prevent conflicts. In that respect, regional organizations of developing countries are playing an increasingly important role. The United Nations should place greater emphasis on its cooperation with such organizations and provide them with assistance and policy incentives in terms of institution-building, information exchange and funding. China calls on the United Nations, as well as on countries and regional organizations that are in a position to do so, to provide greater assistance to the African Union in the area of capacity-building, so that the African Union can play a greater role in maintaining peace and stability in Africa.

The President: I shall now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia.

Mr. Kubiš (Slovakia): It is indeed a great honour for me to address the Security Council today for the first time in my capacity as Foreign Minister of Slovakia. It was not too long ago that I was sitting here at similar events behind another name plate, when I represented the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as its Secretary-General, and before that, as the Special Representative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and head of one of the peacekeeping operations.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate the Greek presidency of the Security Council for the excellent concept paper that further develops this important topic. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of Romania when it served on the Council, which resulted in the unanimous adoption of resolution 1631 (2005) during the Romanian Council presidency in October of last year.

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered later today by my Finnish colleague on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I will limit myself to just a few comments from our perspective.

As a member of the European Union, NATO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and at the same time serving as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Slovakia realizes how important it is that our joint efforts and endeavours are well prepared, synchronized and coordinated. We fully share the Secretary-General's vision of a regional-global security partnership. On the practical level, we welcome the launching of working groups in 2004 and of the standing committee in 2005.

Calls for mechanisms that would provide for a more flexible, effective and regular flow of topical information between the United Nations and regional organizations are not new. The goal is to establish efficient partnerships that would be based on proven comparative advantages of each organization involved in conflict prevention and peacekeeping. In fact, this line of thinking is fully compatible with the two major challenges in cooperation identified by the Secretary-General: clarification of roles, and assistance in building the capacity of partner organizations.

United Nations cooperation with regional organizations is of particular importance and value in the conflict areas that the Security Council tackles on an everyday basis. These days, that applies especially to Africa, and notably to the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, which has become the United Nation's major partner in mediation, conflict resolution and promotion of peace and security on the African continent. An important role is often also played by subregional organizations, for example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This engagement represents one of the most efficient embodiments of the idea of local ownership. Moreover, we fully agree that yet more of our attention and efforts needs to be focused on further assisting Africa in building its own capacities in areas such as early warning, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and crisis management. Also, the ten-year capacity-building plan for the African Union, envisaged in the Summit Outcome Document, deserves our urgent attention.

The most pressing current African security and humanitarian crisis — the Darfur catastrophe — has highlighted the importance of such cooperation. Close cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, whose work we highly commend, as well as between the United Nations and other regional organizations, has been essential. Let me emphasize here the important meeting between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council that was held in Addis Ababa during the most recent Security Council mission to Africa. Such cooperation plays a major role in confidence-building and in guaranteeing sustainable solutions — all in the best interest of the Sudanese people.

We also highly commend the constructive role that the relevant regional organizations — in particular, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference — have been playing in actively engaging with the Sudanese Government in relation to obtaining its consent for the necessary transition from the African Union Mission in Sudan to a United Nations-led operation.

Regional and intergovernmental organizations also have an important role to play in combating terrorism and in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. With respect to the 1540 Committee, which deals with the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Slovakia, as Chair of the Committee, very much counts on cooperation with regional organizations, especially in areas such as facilitating reporting and assisting States to implement national legislative and regulatory measures to prevent

the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials.

Active participation on the part of relevant regional and subregional organizations was essential for the success of the recent United Nations regional seminar on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) held in Beijing. That will also be the case for two other regional seminars, to be held in Ghana and in Peru later this year. Consultations are underway for the OSCE to hold a 1540 workshop in Vienna. Many of these activities would not be possible without the constructive involvement of regional organizations, including their financial contributions.

We have also noted with satisfaction that many regional and intergovernmental organizations have expressed their readiness to work closely with the newly established Peacebuilding Commission, which we think may substantially enhance the Commission's effectiveness and help it become a truly result-oriented body, especially when dealing with individual cases and situations.

Recently, in our work to enhance the Security Council's working methods, we have agreed to further strengthen the Council's interactions with regional and subregional organizations and make them more systematic and more frequent. Such efforts — which, among other things, strengthen Security Council legitimacy — have always enjoyed Slovakia's full support, and we will continue working hard on early and full implementation of all such measures.

In conclusion, let me once again reiterate that while the role of regional organizations in peace operations has been growing, their capacities for sustainable operations are often limited, particularly in developing regions of the world. Therefore, Slovakia supports efforts to build capacity for peacekeeping, peacebuilding or crisis-support operations, including financing mechanisms, both in the United Nations and in regional organizations. That involves both capacity-building for operations and steps and measures that would ensure their success after the operations have been withdrawn.

As a part of these efforts, Slovakia would like to draw attention to a particularly important component of peacebuilding activities that to a large extent determines their sustainable success — security sector reform. Slovakia has made this topic its specific thematic priority during our membership in the Security Council and plans to organize a series of round tables that should eventually contribute to developing a comprehensive policy framework for security sector reform. As a part of this effort, we plan to organize a special round table with regional organizations in December in New York. In our opinion, all that should lead to a thematic debate during our presidency of the Security Council early next year.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Douste-Blazy (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Greece for organizing this meeting on a subject that has taken on growing importance for the Security Council recently. I would also like to underline the presence of the Secretary-General in order to pay tribute to his efforts in strengthening cooperation between his institution, the United Nations, and regional organizations.

As we all know, most of the crises that the Council takes up have been the focus of increasingly active involvement by regional organizations both at the political level and on the ground, with a growing diversity of modalities. This involvement is, in most cases, an essential condition for the success of our action. I am thinking first, as a European, of the growing affirmation of the European Union as a major actor in the service of peace, as witnessed by its commitment in the field in Bosnia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its active involvement alongside other actors in the peace efforts in the Middle East or Darfur, and our support for action carried out by other regional organizations. I am also thinking of Africa, where regional and subregional integration efforts by the countries of the continent elicit respect and admiration.

Operating under extremely difficult conditions, the soldiers of the African Union Mission in the Sudan — to whom I wish to pay tribute — are in the front line in Darfur. In Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, action by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was decisive in stopping the fighting. Finally, the political institutions of the African Union, the Peace and Security Council and the African Union Commission, are emerging as indispensable instruments for peace in Africa.

In the light of those developments, I believe that several lessons can be identified for the Council. The first relates to the continued development of relations between the Security Council and regional organizations as the latter assert themselves as key actors for peace. It is now common for the Council, in most of the crises that come before it, to hear the leaders of the regional organizations involved; close contacts and operational cooperation are developing at all levels between the United Nations and those organizations. That is a very positive development.

The second lesson relates to the complementarity that develops almost naturally, in the spirit of the Charter, between Security Council action and that of regional organizations. The Council needs the specific expertise of those organizations and their intimate knowledge of situations and, especially, of people. For their part, regional actors cannot envision sustainable and legitimate action without Security Council support and without the authority and experience of the United Nations.

Thus, the question is how we can go further and strengthen that interaction, which is so necessary for international peace and security. First, I believe that the Council must continue to encourage efforts towards regional and subregional integration, which are far from having achieved the same level of progress in all parts of the world. To be sure, the impetus for this can come only from the countries and regions concerned, but it is in our collective interest to support and assist their efforts through action by all who can make a contribution. Here I am thinking of Member States, organizations — I have already discussed the European Union role in that regard — and the Secretariat.

In particular, I have in mind the necessary continuation of regional capacity-building, particularly in regard to peacekeeping. Through its national programmes and with the full cooperation of its European partners, France is fully resolved on that issue. I am thinking also of the increasingly diverse and innovative forms of cooperation that have begun in the field to strengthen our actions mutually: the European Union-led peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in support of the United Nations; and the reinforcement, recently decided upon by the Council, of United Nations support to the African Union operation in Darfur.

Beyond that, it seems to me important that we draw lessons from the growing diversity of interventions in the field by regional organizations and the specific skills they have acquired in certain areas: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in strengthening the rule of law; the Organization of American States and the European Union, in organizing electoral processes; and the European Union again, in armed forces and police reform, for example.

Let us encourage the exchange of experience and expertise on those issues among such organizations, and with the United Nations; where we can, let us define best practices and common procedures; and let us take care to ensure greater synergy and better coordination among the actors in the increasingly complex and multidimensional peacekeeping operations we are mounting.

That last point brings me, finally, to the Peacebuilding Commission. When the Secretary-General proposed establishing that body, all States understood the value of such a forum for enhancing the effectiveness of international action in post-conflict situations. Now, our common responsibility as Security Council members is to do everything possible to ensure the success of the Commission in the mission that our heads of State or Government have assigned to it.

I want to emphasize the magnitude of the stakes for our Council and, beyond that, for the United Nations, because, in the final analysis, our action will be judged by our capacity to resolve, in a lasting way, the crises referred to us. It is precisely in that spirit that the Commission was established. France therefore hopes that it will quickly get down to work on specific situations. My country will offer it every support.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): Let me first express my gratitude to you, my colleague Dora Bakoyannis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for submitting his report (S/2006/590) and in particular, for the very useful and practical recommendations it contains. I associate myself with the statement to be delivered later by the Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to highlight two areas — both reflected in the draft presidential statement — which need further and timely attention: the need for further involvement of African organizations in peace efforts, and the fight against terrorism.

We welcome the continued efforts to strengthen cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and African subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The value of cooperation has already been demonstrated in the conflicts in the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. At the same time, those conflicts have clearly shown that a much stronger partnership between the United Nations and African organizations is of vital importance.

The goal should be real impact on the ground. To that end, we need efficient partnerships and a practical division of labour between organizations involved in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization. While the Peacebuilding Commission is designated to have the overall coordinating responsibility for the international response to peacebuilding, the African Union and the subregional organizations are in a unique position to mobilize African resources to assist nations on the African continent.

I therefore encourage the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission to explore how to best support efforts to develop the African security architecture, and to work closely with the African Union and the subregional organizations on issues such as conflict preparedness, planning and capacity-building. Denmark, as members know, is also actively contributing to those efforts through our substantial bilateral assistance to African organizations — the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) — as well as through the European Union. Denmark provides, through its African Programme for Peace, $40 million for capacity-building.

On the second point, Denmark firmly believes that regional organizations can play a particularly important role in the fight against terrorism. Increasingly, regional organizations are developing their own agendas in that field. As Chair of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, Denmark particularly welcomes that trend. Regional organizations have a key role to play in ensuring that action against terrorism is taken across a region. It is crucial that we support that important work.

Politically, regional organizations can help solidify the global consensus by condemning terrorism in all its forms consistently, clearly and vocally. Such an unambiguous message is essential to help eliminate any remaining suggestion that terrorism in some form could be acceptable, because it never is. On the technical level, regional organizations can help member States implement their international obligations. As the Council has noted on several occasions, many States are willing to do more in the fight against terrorism but lack the capacity to do so. Regional organizations can disseminate information, provide and facilitate assistance and support the development of regional and national capacities.

I should like to end on a positive note. Improved cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is a work in progress. Today, we have significant practical experience to build on. With the overall goal of enhancing international peace and security and ensuring real impact on the ground, Denmark remains committed to support concrete initiatives to further improve cooperation in the future.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Taiana, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic.

Mr. Taiana (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, let me congratulate you and your delegation, Madam President, for taking the initiative to hold an open debate on a partnership with regional organizations. I also express my Government's satisfaction for the presence of the distinguished representatives of regional and subregional organizations, and the Secretary-General.

Over the past 15 years, there have been initiatives aimed at establishing a partnership between the United Nations and the regional organizations. They include high-level meetings under the leadership of the Secretary-General, adoption of Security Council resolution 1631 (2005) and publication of the Secretary-General's report on a regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities (S/2006/590). We have seen the strengthening of operational cooperation between the United Nations and the associated organizations in the areas of peacekeeping and international security. This

cooperation has covered conflict prevention, where we consider ensuring respect for human rights in all its aspects to be a basic tenet of our foreign policy.

In the recent past, most of the conflicts on the Security Council's agenda have essentially been the result of civil wars, often caused by political dictatorships, blatant violations of human rights, religious and ethnic persecution and economic exclusion.

Quite often, internal conflicts have expanded to whole regions. For this reason, we support the creation of a regional capacity for the protection of human rights through strong institutions. We share the Secretary-General's strategic vision that building institutional capacity is one of the goals of the partnership with regional organizations as a tool for preventing conflicts.

Today more the ever, the regional organizations must play a major role both in the prevention and solution of conflicts and in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Close geographical proximity and close historical and cultural ties among their members give the regional organizations comparative advantages for better understanding the root causes of regional conflicts and finding peaceful solutions to these problems.

Recent United Nations peacekeeping operations have taken place in close cooperation with regional, subregional and intergovernmental organizations. An example in Latin America is the case of Haiti, where the Organization of American States (OAS) has entered into a strategic partnership with the United Nations, facilitating the fulfilment of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) through the leadership and experience accumulated during voter registration. That has been essential for the free and fair elections that led to the current democratic Government of Haiti.

The Charter of the United Nations confers primary responsibility for peacekeeping and international security on the Security Council. Chapter VIII of the Charter specifies the role of regional organizations for resolving conflicts. The recently created Peacebuilding Commission should be incorporated into this framework. That could contribute to increased coordination among regional organizations and the United Nations through the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, thus creating in the post-conflict phase synergies that would help construct the basis of a cooperation which, by taking advantage of existing complementary elements, would avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Systematic cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, with a clear distribution of functions and appropriate capacities, will increase the effectiveness of the international community in preventing conflicts, allow them to respond rapidly when conflict breaks out and provide solutions for a lasting peace. To that end, as the Secretary-General has suggested in his recent report, balanced distribution of capacities and resources is needed in all regions, so that the knowledge of regional organizations may be used, in the event of conflict, under the legitimate authority of the Security Council.

At the same time, given the existing link between security, peace and development, we believe that the specialized knowledge of regional organizations, whose original mandates were focused on promoting economic integration and trade, may also be useful for guaranteeing the success of strategies for economic growth and stability.

The Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit stressed strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. In order to accelerate this process, it will be necessary not only to eliminate discrepancies between the capacities of the subregional, regional and global organizations, but also partner organizations must define themselves in terms of the Charter provisions under which they operate.

In conclusion, we would like to express our support for the draft presidential declaration presented by the delegation of Greece, which, together with implementation of resolution 1631 (2005) and the current debate, may engender solutions for the operational problems identified by the Secretary-General in his report of 28 July so that strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations may help us to deal with the new challenges and threats of our age.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Establishing collective approaches necessary for effectively overcoming today's threats and challenges requires that we consistently increase the cooperation of the United Nations and the Security Council with regional and subregional organizations. This cooperation is established in the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit and must be based on Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations and the regional organizations must harmoniously complement one another, objectively using their comparative advantages. For the United Nations, this means its universal membership and sphere of activities, its globally acknowledged legitimacy. In turn, the regional organizations have the best knowledge of the situation in their areas of operation and are often better equipped with their own sources of financing. A clear division of labour in maintaining the prerogatives of the United Nations and the Security Council will allow us to increase the international community's ability to counter crises.

An important part of the partnership of the United Nations with regional organizations is peacekeeping in the broadest sense: the elimination of crises, their settlement, post-conflict activities and peacebuilding. We believe in the need to increase the experience of positive cooperation between the Security Council and regional and subregional partners in Africa, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. Russia is contributing to the training of African peacekeepers and will expand this contribution.

An important role in finding solutions to many of the problems in these regions will be played by the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization of American States and other Latin American organizations.

We would also like to see further development of interaction between the United Nations and structures such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Community and NATO, where mechanisms to react to crises are being established. Of course, in this regard we must fully respect the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace, including approving the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

Russia is continuing to assist in intensifying cooperation, first of all in the area of peacemaking, between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). As is known, in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, for example, under almost critical conditions, the CIS peacekeeping forces, in close contact with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, are supporting security and stability.

Russia is also providing support in the context of peacemaking operations in South Ossetia and Transdniestria, where the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is participating in the talks. We believe that those conflicts can be resolved if all the parties conscientiously observe existing agreements. Any attempt to settle the conflicts by breaking with the established mechanisms would prove to be very risky and counterproductive.

There are also substantive prospects for the developing cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Intensive work is being carried out in this context to establish our own peacemaking capabilities, which could contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The establishment of relations between the CSTO, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime opens up particular opportunities for cooperation in those areas.

It would also be useful to ensure cooperation between the CSTO and NATO in fighting the drug threat in Afghanistan. We hope that NATO will respond to the proposals made in that regard two years ago; that would move us some way forward, at least.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is playing an increasingly important role in ensuring stability and security in the Euro-Asian region. Its members have called for the development of interaction with the United Nations in a number of topical areas, including counter-terrorism, the illicit traffic in drugs and post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Russia currently holds the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council and the

Arctic Council. We are therefore very much aware of the work of those organizations, and believe that they could cooperate with the United Nations. That would help to promote what we are doing.

We believe it is urgent to hold regular meetings between the Secretary-General and the leadership of regional organizations. The agenda of United Nations cooperation with regional partners is becoming increasingly broad and diverse. To peacemaking and peacebuilding challenges, we have now added countering the spread of weapons of mass destruction and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, resolving other destabilizing cross-border problems and fighting the illicit drug trade and organized crime.

We hope that the today's discussion will enable us to move forward in implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome and step up the process of improving multidimensional cooperation with regional organizations by strengthening collective security throughout the world on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

Once again, I would like to thank you, Madam, and the Greek delegation, for having prepared the draft presidential statement that we will be adopting later.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Antonio García Belaunde, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru.

Mr. García Belaunde (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, for your very skilful stewardship in the Security Council presidency this month, and to thank you for having taken this initiative to bring us together to consider cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as other intergovernmental bodies, in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The legal framework set out in Chapter VIII of the Charter has acquired particular importance since the end of the cold war. Indeed, over the past 15 years the Security Council has been incorporating into its tasks and mandates joint actions with international regional and subregional organizations. The fact that the majority of the 16 current peacekeeping operations involve the participation of regional organizations shows how strong that new relationship is. Resolution 1631 (2005) reflects that evolution and provides us with a useful inventory on the basis of which we can expand and reinforce areas of cooperation.

We believe that the international system is currently characterized by both globalization and fragmentation, and that the interaction of those two phenomena has called into question governance within many States. Peru is aware of that reality, which is why we have accorded priority to the fight against marginalization and exclusion, which affects the stability of the international system and, in the final analysis, international collective security itself. That particular dynamic means that States must adopt modern approaches that make it possible to ensure democratic governance internally and, from an external perspective, contribute to regional stability.

In that respect, international, regional and subregional organizations are called upon to play a special role in the way that conflicts are prevented, dealt with, and resolved. Their capacities for dealing with structural problems, providing information, analysis and crisis management and carrying out peace operations and institutional and material reconstruction must be utilized and, in many cases, strengthened.

In this context, it is important for regional authorities to develop the own mechanisms. For example, we have established the Andean Zone of Peace, which seeks to resolve subregional conflicts in a peaceful manner and effectively prohibits nuclear, chemical, biological and toxin weapons and antipersonnel landmines. Peru also encouraged the establishment of the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation with a view to building trust and ensuring an ongoing dialogue on security and defence aimed at the gradual reduction of arms acquisitions.

One good example of the potential of the joint approach can be seen in the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. That is a typical peacekeeping operation, carried out in compliance with a Security Council mandate, and which thus has legitimacy that the United Nations Charter grants to the Blue Helmits for those tasks. It is also evidence of the capacity of the countries of the region to administer that United Nations mandate through regional bodies such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community and the Rio Group, which is a mechanism for political consultation and dialogue.

In the case of Haiti, the OAS has played an important role at the institutional level, and we believe

that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional and subregional organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank should join that effort and help to promote an international environment that reinforces stability, supports development projects that expand production, facilitates trade, generates jobs and makes viable the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons.

The Rio Group, for its part, since the establishment of its military presence, has made it possible to coordinate the peacekeeping effort. That has not only made a significant contribution to restoring peace in Haiti, but it has also made possible the development of the joint working capacity of the armed forces of the region. It has thus become a mechanism for confidence-building that opens new prospects for military cooperation and promotes mutual knowledge and understanding.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have given the Peacebuilding Commission comprehensive responsibility for the post-conflict phase. I would like to stress, however, that regional and subregional organizations for integration and economic development must be involved so as to help define political objectives and priority areas for reconstruction.

Here, we believe that multinational entities, grouped together, for example, in the Global Compact, should also be involved to contribute economic, social and political viability to the rebuilding efforts carried out by the nationals of each country and by the international community.

In conclusion, I would like to say that regional and subregional mechanisms must cooperate with each other and undertake multilateral activities at the global level so as to strengthen the purposes and principles of United Nations, with due attention given to the needs of each particular region.

Peru expresses its support for the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the end of this debate.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Asha-Rose Mtengeti Migiro, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mrs. Migiro (United Republic of Tanzania): Tanzania pays tribute to you, Madam President, and to your delegation for having organized this important debate. Regional organizations play a vital role in maintaining peace and stability in their respective regions. We therefore welcome the presence of representatives of regional organizations at this meeting to give us their perspective from the field.

The United Nations has a long history of collaboration with regional organizations. That history of collaboration has enabled regional organizations to become increasingly involved in brokering peace agreements, in conflict resolution and in peacekeeping. In a number of countries — including, recently, the Sudan — they have played a useful role complementary to the efforts made by the Security Council. They are indispensable partners in maintaining regional and international peace and security. But, even with those positive developments, more is required.

Tanzania believes that an institutionalized approach and mechanism will make possible a shift from the present fragile arrangements to a more substantive and regularized cooperation. That is central to the needs of both the United Nations and regional organizations in the fulfilment of their common responsibilities for maintaining peace and in the prevention of armed conflict.

The challenge, as we see it, lies in devising practical arrangements for strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations in keeping with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. In that regard, the African Union has done a tremendous job under very difficult circumstances, both in brokering the Darfur Peace Agreement and in monitoring the N'Djamena Ceasefire Agreement.

As the primary United Nations organ responsible for peace and security, the Security Council has the power and the prerogative to advance cooperation with regional and intergovernmental organizations to a higher level so as to make it more effective and responsive to challenges that threaten international peace and security.

The African Union, in the context of the African Union Mission in the Sudan, has demonstrated the advantages offered by a regional organization: physical proximity to the conflict and a greater understanding of the dynamics. We believe that the African Union, in this case, stands to benefit from a formalized

arrangement with the United Nations in developing the institutional and operational capacity of the African Union Peace and Security Council, in the training of civilian and military personnel, and in the exchange of information, early-warning systems, communication and capacity-building at both the peacekeeping and the peacebuilding stages.

We are very mindful of the benefits that regional organizations have gained through cooperation with other regional and intergovernmental organizations. The European Union, for instance, has helped Africa to establish the African Peace Facility, while the Group of Eight provides direct bilateral assistance to the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to mention them. That kind of cooperation should continue alongside that between the United Nations and regional organizations.

In conclusion, I believe that our debate today should result in a firm resolve to translate our determination to institutionalize cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations into concrete and sustainable action. The Security Council must enable the United Nations to effectively implement that resolve. Finally, my delegation wishes to support the draft presidential statement, we thank the Greek delegation for having prepared it.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kim Howells, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Howells (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the Under-Secretary of State of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Today's debate is an important opportunity to focus on strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and regional, subregional and intergovernmental organizations. I thank you, Madam President, for your foresight in convening it.

The United Nations is a uniquely legitimate and indispensable global body. But it cannot operate in isolation. The demands on the United Nations, particularly in the area of peacekeeping, expand continually. In many areas, it is only by working closely with its regional and international partners that the United Nations can effectively deliver to those most in need.

That applies more widely, too, across the international community's response to the critical challenges we face, including terrorism and proliferation, poverty, climate change, and the protection and promotion of human rights. The United Kingdom therefore welcomes the Security Council's commitment, expressed in the statement to be adopted today, to expand cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. That will strengthen the Council's ability to respond to conflict through prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.

Nowhere is that more necessary than in Darfur. The African Union (AU) peacekeeping force — the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) — has done an outstanding job in very difficult circumstances. It should now be allowed to share that burden with the United Nations and with the wider international community. It is unreasonable to expect any single regional organization to maintain the level of force needed in Darfur for long periods. The AU itself has recognized, over many months, the need for a transition to the United Nations. The Council endorsed that conclusion again through resolution 1706 (2006), agreeing to provide AMIS with support and to reinforce it, with the aim of taking over by the end of this year.

We cannot understand why the Government of Sudan, while accepting a United Nations force on almost identical terms in the south of the country, is turning its back on United Nations help in the west of Sudan. We very much hope that contacts in New York this week will help President Al-Bashir to understand that our goal is to help the Sudan. But equally, we cannot stand idly by if the Sudan pursues a military solution of its own in Darfur. The Council will need to act to support the AU and to shoulder its own responsibilities. But we hope that such a crisis can yet be averted.

As we know, the European Union has also developed its role in international peace and security since the launch of the European Security and Defence Policy by the United Kingdom and France almost 10 years ago. We welcome the increasing role played by regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention efforts, as outlined by the Secretary-General

in his recent progress report on the prevention of armed conflict. The League of Arab States has an important role to play as we aim to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process. We also welcome the increasingly close relations between the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The three organizations have common aims and purposes. By working together, they can enhance one another's contributions to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and their response to security challenges.

But now we need to build stronger relationships between the United Nations and regional organizations. In particular, we need to identify the relative strengths of each and to build up their expertise and capacity. Full implementation of resolutions 1625 (2005) and 1653 (2006), on African peacekeeping, should be a high priority both for the United Nations and for Member States.

The EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the OSCE and the United Nations continue to cooperate closely. Darfur is a clear example of the EU, NATO and the United Nations all working together to provide support on the ground. We expect similarly valuable cooperation among the EU, NATO and the OSCE in Kosovo, where the EU plans to have a mission operating alongside NATO.

I would use today's debate to invite the Secretary-General to reflect on whether the United Nations can bring together those regional organizations most closely engaged across the conflict cycle — particularly the EU and the AU — to develop genuine operational partnerships in order to strengthen their crucial cooperation.

Greater informal coordination would help us to ensure that the international community engages on security sector reform, on demobilization, on developing capable security forces under democratic control and, across the spectrum of conflict, all essential elements to achieve sustainable peace and development.

The activities of the human rights bodies and actors of the United Nations complement and build on work in the field of human rights by relevant regional organizations.

We are also pleased that several regional organizations were able to present their valuable experiences of internal review mechanisms at informal consultations in Geneva earlier this month on the Human Rights Council's new universal periodic review.

The establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission at last year's World Summit was a major achievement, bringing together development, security and diplomatic expertise to take a holistic approach to peacebuilding. The Commission brings together for the first time in a formal grouping Member States, international financial institutions, regional and development organizations to help secure lasting peace and rebuild countries ravaged by conflict. The Commission has many challenges ahead, and the support and cooperation of regional organizations will be critical to its success.

This is all positive. But the challenge today and in the future is not just to continue this effort, but to enhance and expand it. What is needed is targeted capacity-building of regional organizations. Practical, real-time opportunities to work together should be identified. The Security Council's recent commitment to enhance cooperation with regional organizations should be put into practice. By doing so, the United Nations and its regional and international partners have a better chance of achieving our strategic objectives.

As a proud member of the European Union, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth, NATO, the G-8 and, above all else, the United Nations, the United Kingdom is committed to continuing this effort. If there are agreed aims and purposes, common objectives, shared resources and mutual understanding, then no matter how difficult the situation, no matter how difficult the issue, the international community can tackle the problem head on with confidence and conviction.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Basile Ikouebe, Permanent Representative of the Congo and representative of the Chairman of the African Union.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, your counterpart, Minister Rodolphe Adada, was getting ready to take part in today's debate, but he has been detained elsewhere for a meeting the contents of which concern our debate because it is a summit meeting of the African Union's Peace and Security

Council on Darfur. Therefore, he has asked me to deliver the following statement:

"Madam President, Greece has assumed the presidency of the Security Council for this month with great skill and dexterity, and we see proof of this in the organization of the current meeting to which you have invited the African Union (AU).

"I am especially grateful that you have proposed for discussion at this meeting a very significant theme for Africa in particular — that is, challenges of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and other intergovernmental bodies in maintaining international peace and security.

"My country has assumed the responsibilities of Chairman of the African Union and, therefore, we are increasingly aware of the need and the importance of such cooperation, which, in some cases, takes the form of a true partnership, such as in Darfur or in Côte d'Ivoire.

"I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the excellent report he has just submitted to us. We strongly support the content of this report.

"This debate fits into the approach that was outlined in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit and stresses the importance of strengthening relationships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, as indicated in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

"There is a need, then, to integrate these new tools of cooperation with a view to greater effectiveness and proximity in order to meet real needs in the area of peace, security and development.

"In this respect, the relevance of Security Council resolution 1631 (2005), the first of its kind, adopted on 17 October 2005, is abundantly clear. It advocates regular meetings with regional and subregional organizations in order to strengthen cooperation with these organizations in maintaining international peace and security, ensuring if possible that such meetings coincide with high-level meetings held with the heads of regional and other intergovernmental organizations. We are pleased to see that this intention is again taking shape today.

"Therefore, we have the heavy responsibility of designing a world order that must respond to a common vision and use complementarities and comparative advantages in a clear division of labour. We agree with the Secretary-General when he says that implementing such a vision will not be easy. In fact, if we refer to Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter as a basis for operational cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, we have to recognize the important role that regional organizations can play in the area of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disarmament, non-proliferation, the protection of civilians and natural disasters.

"I will now mention a few of these areas. First of all, with respect to conflict prevention, even though it is basically the prerogative of Member States, we are pleased to note that the African Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union, for example, all have a conflict prevention centre with an early warning system. Likewise, thanks to the help of the United Nations, Central Africa has a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which helps to promote respect for human rights, mitigate injustices and prevent conflicts in the region. This mechanism fits perfectly into the framework defined by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

"We agree with the Secretary-General that regional and subregional organizations could do more in this area, but, unfortunately, they have to face logistical, financial and human-resource difficulties and therefore must continue to rely also on international cooperation.

"When it comes to peacemaking, we have also acknowledged that regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in this area manifested itself through, for example, the dispatch of mediators, envoys and special representatives with respect to Burundi, the inter-Congolese dialogue, the international conference on the Great Lakes region and the talks on Darfur.

"As regards peacekeeping, the African Union has set up collective mechanisms, such as the Council for Peace and Security, which is meeting at the present time. Subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States could also benefit from the fulfilling experience. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to a strengthened partnership between the United Nations and the African Union for the management of the crisis in Darfur. Africa believes that the transition to a United Nations force fits perfectly into the logic that has prevailed in this type of situation until now. We will not say any more at this stage. We will await the conclusions of the meeting that is under way.

"Furthermore, we must point out that, in order to strengthen its capacity for intervention through standby arrangements, the African Union has called for the establishment of five brigades of 3,500 to 5,000 men by the year 2010. The international community should support that initiative, which would set an example for other theatres of operation.

"Peacebuilding has a very clear regional dimension. We are convinced that regional and subregional organizations that are partners of the United Nations, as well as financial institutions, can play a major role in establishing an integrated and coordinated approach in that area. That is one of the missions that has been entrusted to the recently established Peacebuilding Commission and in which Africa places great hope.

"The challenges we must address in today's debate involve defining the role and determining the nature of the United Nations partner organizations that intervene in the maintenance of international peace and security. In that respect, we share the views of the Secretary-General, who proposes that the Security Council study the question of the scope of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations and assess the extent to which they choose to identify themselves either as regional organizations acting under Chapter VIII of the Charter or as intergovernmental organizations acting under other provisions.

"After determining their nature and capacity for action, it would be possible to define their operational scope of action, whereby we would determine the role of each organization. Thus, in order to avoid confusion in this area, we must ask international, regional and subregional organizations that would wish to contribute to strengthening cooperation with the United Nations to conclude a formal agreement with the Secretary-General in response to the appeal launched by the heads of State at the 2005 summit.

"In conclusion, with respect once again to Africa, we warmly welcome resolution 1625 (2005) on strengthening the effectiveness of the Council's role in conflict prevention, in particular in Africa. As current Chairman of the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, Congo fully appreciates the importance of such an instrument.

"Lastly, my delegation fully supports the draft presidential statement patiently negotiated and submitted by the President's delegation."

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Jackie Wolcott Sanders, the alternative representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Sanders (United States of America): We welcome the presence here of you, Sir, and your Foreign Minister to preside over the Council's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

This topic is timely and of growing importance as the agenda of this Council grows ever longer and the issues of peace and security grow more complex. We share your interest in exploring ways to enhance that coordination and burden-sharing as part of our continuing joint efforts to identify efficient and effective methods to help international peace and security. We welcome in particular the opportunity that today's debate represents to review cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as ways to increase the impact of such cooperation on advancing Security Council objectives.

The activities of regional organizations, when properly planned and capably implemented, can strengthen and reinforce a variety of critically important objectives, such as the resolution of conflict

and the maintenance of peace, promoting democracy and human rights, strengthening international security cooperation, countering terrorism and transnational crime, and even supporting economic development.

Regional organizations can bring unique and important connections, knowledge and experience to any effort to address problems and conflicts in their regions. A cooperative multilateral approach between the appropriate United Nations organs and the appropriate regional organizations has the potential to create valuable synergies and to significantly increase the probability of successful interventions. Enhanced cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations can be valuable especially when they share lessons learned and information about peacekeeping missions.

We should encourage the Security Council and the Secretariat to consult with appropriate regional actors when necessary, to exchange information and to search for ways to better utilize their expertise in conflict resolution and prevention. However, we believe in general that this should be informal and should not detract from the important relationship among the Member States within the United Nations. We must be careful about imposing any requirements that would limit our ability in a time of crisis.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kenzo Oshima, the Permanent Representative of Japan.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): Allow me first to convey the regrets of my Foreign Minister, Mr. Aso, to the President, the Foreign Minister of Greece, and ministers present at not being able himself to participate in today's meeting due to important party events back home.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Greece for its initiative to convene this open debate today. We are fortunate to have the Foreign Minister of Greece presiding in person over this important meeting.

We also welcome the participation in the debate of the representatives of important regional organizations.

The role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security has indeed been growing, and the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has become an essential factor in that regard.

Although the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, have been playing the central role in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, complementary measures by regional organizations have become increasingly substantive. The involvement of regional organizations, with their intimate knowledge of local conditions, resources, expertise, and regional ownership in the efforts for peace and security, is a clear advantage and serves as a key factor in conflict resolution and the subsequent peacebuilding process.

There is also a need for the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies to strengthen their cooperation with a variety of organizations having wide-ranging networks in implementing Security Council resolutions. From those points of view, too, cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations is essential. In that regard, I wish to touch upon a few areas.

First, the role played by regional organizations in addressing conflicts has produced some tangible results, which can already be seen in the activities of the African Union and the European Union, as manifested, for example, in the activities of the African Mission in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Sudan and the European Union Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is our view that cooperation to facilitate the rapid deployment of peacekeepers will enable us to cope with conflicts with greater speed and efficiency. There are various options available for the enhancement of such capacities — for example, through possible arrangements between the United Nations and regional organizations or their member countries — under which the United Nations would more efficiently provide, with the assistance of the donor community, training, equipment and other capacity-building assistance to the troops of regional organizations or their member countries. Although such capacity-building assistance has already been provided through bilateral and G-8 frameworks, if we could systematize assistance already provided by some donor countries in this field, thus assuring a stronger link between those activities and the United Nations, efficiency would be dramatically increased.

Secondly, an important aspect of the role played by regional organizations in peacebuilding lies in

encouraging regional ownership of the post-conflict process. Japan supports the participation of regional organizations in the Peacebuilding Commission and welcomes the active involvement of relevant regional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States, in the country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone and Burundi.

Thirdly, there is a need for enhanced dialogue between those organizations and the Security Council. Japan has offered two proposals as specific measures to facilitate closer cooperation between the Council and regional organizations. The first is that, when they are visiting on Security Council missions, representatives of the Council should arrange to meet with representatives of regional organizations. The second is that more opportunities should be made available for representatives of regional organizations to brief the Security Council on their activities.

With regard to the first proposal, we welcome the very first meeting between a Security Council mission and the AU Peace and Security Council, which was held in Addis Ababa during the mission's visit to the Sudan and Chad in June. Concerning the second proposal, we were pleased to learn that opportunities for regional organizations to brief the Security Council are steadily increasing, as exemplified by the briefing by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development on the situation in Somalia that is planned for later in September.

In order to enhance the implementation of Security Council resolutions, the Council and its subsidiary bodies should establish cooperation with a wide range of organizations. We value the fact that subsidiary bodies of the Council, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), are seeking to strengthen their cooperation, not only with regional organizations such as the AU, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Organization of American States, the EU, NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but also with other international organizations, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Customs Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization.

Japan pays high tribute to the African Union for its many efforts aimed at conflict prevention and conflict resolution as an expression of African ownership, including the highly commendable efforts of AMIS in Darfur. In order to support those efforts, Japan has provided various forms of assistance to promote the capacity-building of the African Union and its operations. We will continue that support as appropriate.

Finally, we would like to thank the delegation of Greece for its preparation of the draft presidential statement, which we support. Japan will support existing and new initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Nana Effah-Apenteng, Permanent Representative of Ghana.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, I wish to apologize to Her Excellency Ms. Dora Bakoyannis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, for the inability of my minister to be here due to the meeting on Darfur of the African Union Peace and Security Council. My minister really wanted to be here personally, which is why he asked for Ghana's speaking position to be changed from fifth to last. In his absence, I have the honour to read out his statement on his behalf.

> "I congratulate the Foreign Minister of Greece and the other members of the Greek delegation on Greece's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September, and wish them every success in their term of office. Our gratitude also goes to all Council members for their cooperation and support during Ghana's presidency in the month of August, which had to grapple with the difficult situations in Lebanon and the Sudan.
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> "Lately, we have observed some worrying trends in the relations between the United Nations and some African countries. We therefore welcome the opportunity to revisit the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and regional entities, in order to determine how best we can meet immediate and longer-term challenges.

"Certainly, effective cooperation between the United Nations and regional entities such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the promotion of peace and security can be achieved only if those regional bodies use their leverage with member States to further our shared objectives. We believe regional entities have an obligation to strengthen the hand of the United Nations in peacemaking by ensuring, among other things, that international peace efforts are not obstructed.

"Indisputably, it has been the unwavering commitment of ECOWAS to peace and its determination to work with the United Nations that has made the collaboration of the two entities so productive, especially in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The difference between token gestures of cooperation and the meaningful regional-global security partnership envisaged in Chapter VIII of the Charter is clear for all to see. In stark contrast to that is the lack of cooperation shown by a few member States of the AU, which could unravel the Union's role in the regional-global security partnership.

"In that connection, it is our expectation that the restrictions imposed on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea will soon be lifted. Similarly, the expansion of the United Nations presence already in southern Sudan into Darfur is a must, if the lives of millions of displaced persons are to be saved.

"Last month, at the end of the open debate initiated by Ghana on the subject of peace consolidation in West Africa (see S/PV.5509), the consensus in the Council was for an enhancement of the highly productive cooperation that we have witnessed between the United Nations and ECOWAS in stabilizing our region after years of conflict. We commend the Council for the important initiatives it has undertaken in recent years to enhance cooperation with the AU and ECOWAS. In particular, we appreciate the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the West African Subregion, comprising representatives of various departments in the Secretariat and the specialized agencies, as well as the efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa, under its leader Mr. Ahmed Ould Abdallah, in forging a close working relationship between the world body and its regional counterpart while highlighting the importance of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to peacemaking.

"We expect from those contacts the development of a workable framework for further cooperation, especially in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, led by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi in 2000. As the report rightly notes, both AU and ECOWAS are very enthusiastic about regionally-led peacekeeping operations but have weaknesses in their planning and management capabilities, which are aggravated by inadequate financial resources.

"We support the proposals for cooperation in the development of the required capacity in those areas, in addition to others such as the coordinated use of logistics sites, co-listing of African standby forces' capacities in the United Nations standby arrangements system, organizing staff exchanges between their respective headquarters, sharing lessons learned and planning expertise and improving the use of early-warning and analytical information in Africa as well as harmonizing training and teaching materials.

"At the same time, we must take into account the other practical recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2006/590) on the regional-global security partnership and related challenges and opportunities. The report was the outcome of six high-level meetings held between 1994 and 2005. Of particular interest to us is the current United Nations desk-to-desk consultations with the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. That model could be adapted and used to enhance dialogue between the United Nations and both the AU and ECOWAS on conflict prevention.

"Additionally, we could work together with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations to further implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and

Light Weapons in All Its Aspects through the promotion of technical assistance and international cooperation programmes. Effective use must be made of the practical lessons learned from decades of experience in peacemaking, as has been demanded by the Security Council in various resolutions and presidential statements.

"We also intend to contribute towards the elaboration of a general statement of principles, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report, which could provide a guiding mechanism for future collaboration with and between all signatories and the United Nations.

"One area of concern pertains to the need to strengthen coordination between the AU and regional organizations, most of which are only in their formative stages and therefore lack well-developed institutions. We also acknowledge the need for the various regional entities, within their regions, to rationalize their activities in order to avoid wasteful duplication of effort.

"The best guarantee of peace and security for all nations in the world today is a credible multilateral system organized around the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Over the years, the United Nations has invested sizeable resources in an endeavour to create strong partnerships with various regional bodies, in order to make use of their unique advantages. We appreciate the supportive role of NATO, the European Union and several other intergovernmental bodies. We believe that behind all those efforts there can be no higher objective for the regional-global security partnership we are building than working together to extend to most of mankind the rights and basic protections guaranteed by the Charter.

"Ghana, under the leadership of President of the Republic, His Excellency General John Agyekum Kufuor, is of the firm conviction that, ultimately, the attainment of that happy state in West Africa will be a function of twin simultaneous developments — democratic popular empowerment and rapid economic growth — so that, in this generation, mass poverty can be eradicated in West Africa, which would enable the West African peoples to join in the ever-broadening movement for global progress and prosperity in conditions of greater security and peace. That is the path on which the West African people want to travel. The world community, as a matter of our common humanity, should give maximum support to that determination."

Finally, Mr. President, my delegation supports the draft presidential statement that your delegation has prepared.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Markus Lyra, Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Lyra: My Foreign Minister truly wanted to be here today, but he is now attending a meeting of the Quartet on the Middle East peace process.

I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Let me first thank the presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely meeting. At the 2005 world summit, the United Nations membership agreed on supporting a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter. One of the European Union's priorities for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly is to support the development of cooperation between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations as a way to strengthen effective multilateralism. We see this as an area with potential; such cooperation has already yielded results.

The cooperation among the European Union, the United Nations and the African Union is a good example of how these efforts can lead to concrete achievements. Capacity-building to enhance the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations is also addressed in the excellent discussion paper by the Greek presidency of the Security Council (S/2006/719, annex), and the EU is ready to discuss its recommendations.

We welcome the emphasis on the increased responsibility of regional organizations for and ownership of efforts to solve regional conflicts. At the same time, it is important that this take place in framework of the United Nations and with the Security Council's support, and that universal principles such as the rule of law, human rights and peacebuilding be respected.

It is useful for us to be together here today to exchange views on the way forward. I would, however, also like to add a word of caution. We should look for results, and we should be careful to avoid creating additional structures. I fully agree with the Secretary-General that the establishment of a more effective partnership should be based the comparative advantage of each organization. We should also be careful not to force a uniform framework on organizations that are very different from one another.

It can be useful to provide conceptual clarification on the role of the organizations participating in this framework. The Capacity Survey by the United Nations University clearly shows the vast discrepancy in the working areas, roles and capacities of the organizations taking part in this partnership. While fully supporting efforts to enhance capacity-building, in particular of the African Union and of African subregional organizations, the European Union agrees with the Secretary-General that we should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. What counts are the results. The EU considers that flexibility, light structures and, first of all, pragmatism should be the guidelines for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The report of Secretary-General (S/2006/590) identifies a number of areas for strengthened cooperation, in particular conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and disarmament and non-proliferation. These are all areas where the European Union is active and cooperates with the United Nations. I will address these issues in further detail in our statement at the seventh high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional and other international organizations, on 22 September. In the context of today's meeting, I will rather explain the philosophy behind the European Union's cooperation with the United Nations and give a concrete example of how this is translated into action, in particular in the area of crisis management.

The European Union considers that its relations with the United Nations are one of the cornerstones of its external action. As stated in the European Security Strategy of 2003, one of the EU's central priorities is strengthening the United Nations and equipping it to fulfil its responsibilities and to act effectively. The European Union is itself a structure for peace and security in its region. The EU was created to overcome the legacy of two world wars and to prevent new wars in Europe. The founding idea of the European Union is to create a zone of peace and prosperity based on the voluntary pooling of sovereignty, common institutions and the rule of law. The EU emphasizes the same values in wider international relations. Building on its own experience, the European Union is an active proponent of effective multilateralism.

The EU's commitment to support the United Nations has been reaffirmed on many occasions, both in important statements, including at the level of heads of State or Government, and through action. Relations between the European Union and the United Nations have been intensified in recent years. I would like in particular to highlight the EU-United Nations cooperation in crisis management. This began to develop at a time when the United Nations was looking at the reform of its peace operations in the framework of the process of the report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, which coincided with the laying of the foundations of the European Security and Defence Policy. The United Nations, confronted with the changing nature of peacekeeping, sought increased support from regional actors.

Two operations under the European Security and Defence Policy, in 2003, were real and successful tests of the EU-United Nations relationship. The EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina took over from the United Nations International Police Task Force. And the EU-led Operation Artemis, carried out in the summer of 2003 in accordance with Security Council resolution 1484 (2003), succeeded in stabilizing the security conditions, improving the humanitarian situation and protecting the civilian population in Bunia, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Those examples of cooperation on the ground constituted a major breakthrough in relations between the two organizations. A framework for consultations between the two organizations was set up by the Joint

Declaration on United Nations-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management, of September 2003, which identified four areas for further cooperation: planning, training, communication and best practices. A consultative mechanism, the Steering Committee, was set up in order to enhance coordination in those areas between the United Nations — in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs — and the EU staff.

Since the beginning of 2003, the EU has engaged in more than a dozen military or civilian operations, most of them in close cooperation with the United Nations. The new relationship with the United Nations has undoubtedly also stimulated the European Union's efforts at improving its crisis management capacity, and it has developed into very fruitful cooperation. I will not go into details on technical cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union, but will just briefly draw attention to a recent achievement: the European Union has deployed a military operation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the deployment to Kinshasa of an advance element of several hundred military personnel and a battalion-sized force over the horizon, quickly deployable if necessary.

The United Nations and the European Union have also cooperated constructively in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as regards election observation. The deployment of some 300 EU observers occurred with the full logistical support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and the EU Election Observation Mission's security arrangements enabled it to request assistance by MONUC where required throughout the EU Mission's period of deployment.

Another recent development is the EU's role in the efforts to ensure a swift implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). At the extraordinary meeting of the Council of the European Union on 25 August, the EU Foreign Ministers had an exchange of views with Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the situation in Lebanon. The Council welcomed the elements provided by Mr. Annan on the operational framework of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The significant overall contribution of the EU member States, becoming the backbone of UNIFIL, demonstrates that the European Union lives up to its responsibilities.

A further area of cooperation that I would like to emphasize, as the Secretary-General has in his report, is conflict prevention. Indeed, since 2003 a regular geographical desk-to-desk dialogue has been taking place between the EU and the United Nations on conflict prevention.

Let me mention the newly established Peacebuilding Commission, which is now becoming operational. The Commission will have a central role in the United Nations system in the definition of peacebuilding strategies for countries emerging from conflict and in enhancing coordination. Close cooperation with regional organizations and the involvement of civil society in peacebuilding will be important for the Commission's success. The relevant regional organizations should be involved in accordance with their working areas, roles and capacities. As a leading global player in peacebuilding and a major provider of funds to this effect, the European Union is committed to fully and actively contribute to the work of the Commission from the beginning.

I will conclude by stating that it is a priority for the European Union to continue to deepen and broaden its cooperation with the United Nations, both in the areas I have indicated and in many others.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, to take the floor.

Mr. Insulza (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Security Council on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations for the maintenance of peace and security.

I should say first that the Organization of American States (OAS) shares and fully supports the Secretary-General's initiative for a regional and global strategic partnership in this area. It cannot be any other way, given that the OAS is an organization with political purposes, composed of 35 States that are Members of the United Nations. As a result, the ideas, challenges and opportunities that often confront us are similar, principally in the development and solution of crisis situations and in governance and development.

Therefore, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1631 (2005), which affirmed the need for important steps to develop cooperation between our

organizations, we have been participating actively in the standing committee as well as in other activities in that area. We share the idea, mentioned here on several occasions, regarding the need to move from a simple policy of consultation to a much clearer regulation of operational activities between us. We hope to be able to contribute to that with our efforts and also with our specific experiences, especially experience over the last year with respect to our work in conjunction with the United Nations.

The most relevant of those experiences certainly has been our cooperation with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), through the special OAS mission in that country, in restoring the democratic system. We jointly assumed the task of cooperating with the provisional Government of Haiti in carrying out democratic elections. We had a very suitable distribution of work. With the Government, the OAS developed an electoral register with 3.5 million voters. With the logistical support of MINUSTAH and the United Nations, we conducted the most democratic and participatory elections that have ever taken place in the history of that country.

With respect to cooperation between our regional organization and the United Nations, I believe our experience in Haiti makes it possible for us to confront the challenges we still have in that country — which is in the process of transition — to continue to support together the Government of René Preval in the full democratization and national reconstruction and peacemaking in the country, and to share experiences to promote future cooperation with institutions. That cooperation has made it possible for the forces of several countries that are members of the OAS and of the United Nations to participate in MINUSTAH. Latin Americans have thus clearly begun a much greater involvement in the resolution of their own conflicts. In our opinion, that should be the new form of cooperation among us in the future.

I believe our other experiences have also been positive, such as the dialogue we have had in other crises in the region — in Ecuador, and in Bolivia. We have shown that we can dialogue and work together. However, experience has also shown that we should have had prior consultations, before a parallel involvement in those countries, which are members of our organization. We believe that it is much better that we prevent crises together, that we dialogue together, that we have common policies, and then we carry out, as in Haiti, a proper division of functions and competencies so that our action will be as effective as possible.

I believe we have experience in this area. For example, we have cooperated significantly with the organizations of the system, such as with the International Labour Organization in preparing the most recent summit in the Argentine Republic, in Mar del Plata. We worked together in electoral observations missions; we have ongoing cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which for all practical purposes is also part of the inter-American system as well as of the United Nations. The Human Development Reports of the United Nations Development Programme have also been a fundamental instrument, alongside policies of our countries, which the OAS has also sponsored.

We have to be able to coordinate all this in future, as we said here, pragmatically and flexibly but also in a more stable fashion. We have to find ways to institutionalize our cooperation — not through bodies, not through establishing new institutions, but with permanent norms that would show us, in the case of each institution, in which areas we can carry out clear and effective cooperation. We believe regional organizations can provide better commitment and a clearer vision, greater political and cultural knowledge, in conflicts taking place within their geographic area. That cooperation will enable United Nations action to be more effective in defending peace and security.

The President: I now invite Mr. Lauro Baja, Chairman of the New York Committee of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to take the floor.

Mr. Baja: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalem, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Philippines.

ASEAN congratulates the Greek presidency on its excellent stewardship of the Council in September, and you, Madam President, for continuing the Council's discussion of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in a public meeting.

ASEAN continues to fully support the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, and in developing friendly relations among nations and international cooperation in solving international problems. Over the past four decades, ASEAN has concluded several initiatives which have significantly contributed to peace, security and stability in the region. These include the declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in South-East Asia, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN+3 — ASEAN plus China, Japan and Korea — process, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and regional actions undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations with regard to Cambodia and Timor-Leste.

ASEAN is currently engaged in bringing ASEAN's political and security cooperation to a higher plane under the ASEAN Security Community, which is the third pillar of the organization's objective of establishing an ASEAN Community by 2020. The ASEAN Security Community aims to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment. The ASEAN Security Community would also strengthen ASEAN's capacity to deal with traditional and non-traditional security challenges.

ASEAN's efforts towards that end recently received a major boost with the accession by Australia, China, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Russia to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. ASEAN expects more countries to accede in the next few months. Those developments constitute significant support for the Treaty as a code of conduct governing inter-State relations in the region.

Fighting terrorism and other transnational crime is another priority area for cooperation among ASEAN member countries. ASEAN has issued joint declarations with Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Pakistan, Russia and the United States on cooperation in counter-terrorism and on combating transnational crime.

The ASEAN Regional Forum, as the primary forum on peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, is moving beyond confidence-building measures towards preventive diplomacy. ASEAN, as a driving force of the Forum, has expanded contacts with various international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to exchange experiences and best practices in promoting peace and security. In fact, several United Nations agencies and entities, such as the International Maritime Organization, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs have participated in Forum activities.

ASEAN cooperation with the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security was highlighted during the first ASEAN-United Nations Summit, held in Bangkok in 2000, when ASEAN leaders and the United Nations Secretary-General called for closer cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations in activities such as exchanging information and organizing conferences on issues relating to peacebuilding.

That cooperation was further strengthened with the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 57/35 in 2002 and 59/5 in 2004. Both resolutions encouraged the two organizations to further increase contacts and strengthen areas of cooperation. With the assistance and support of the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, a series of seminars on peacebuilding in South-East Asia has been conducted in ASEAN member countries. ASEAN hopes there will be more activities to that end.

ASEAN-United Nations cooperation reached another milestone last year with the convening of the second ASEAN-United Nations Summit at United Nations Headquarters. The Summit agreed on the need to further broaden ASEAN-United Nations cooperation, with the involvement of the various United Nations specialized agencies, to encompass all areas related to community-building, including key issues on development, in particular poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals, prevention and control of infectious diseases, disaster management, trade and investment, and peace and security.

ASEAN believes that regional organizations should not only maintain but also explore and expand

contacts and relations with various countries and regional and international organizations in pursuit of peace. Aside from its 11 dialogue partners, ASEAN maintains interregional consultations with Latin America through the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation and the Rio Group, with Europe through the Asia-Europe Meeting process, with the Gulf Cooperation Council, with the Economic Cooperation Organization and with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Cooperation among regional organizations themselves should therefore be encouraged. A good opportunity occurs annually during the annual sessions of the General Assembly, when bilateral meetings between regional organizations can be organized on the fringes of the session. ASEAN has developed its own tradition of meeting at the ministerial level with other regional organizations during General Assembly sessions.

Different regional organizations have different levels of capacity, mandates and resources. In order to assess their potential to contribute to the United Nations efforts in the maintenance of international peace and security, the comparative advantages of the regional organizations should be determined. In that regard, a region-to-region study may need to be carried out in order to identify how each regional organization could individually cooperate with the United Nations to achieve our goals.

We believe the debate in today's public meeting on this issue is timely and relevant, and we hope that the various ideas generated here will further enhance United Nations cooperation with regional organizations.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States, to take the floor.

Mr. Mahmassani (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

The League of Arab States welcomes the opportunity to participate in this important meeting to discuss the challenges facing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security. I am especially grateful to the delegation of Greece for the discussion paper (S/2006/719, annex) it prepared to guide the debate.

I wish to make a number of points on the item on the Council's agenda. First, peacekeeping and the maintenance of international peace and security constitute the fundamental pillar of the Security Council's mandate. Here, the Council is facing significant challenges with respect to a world situation marked by tension. The Security Council, the United Nations and regional organizations thus have an additional burden to bear as they confront difficult issues that can be dealt with only through close partnership among them all.

Secondly, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is defined in Chapter VIII of the Charter. However, international circumstances demonstrate that that relationship needs to be re-examined in the light of changing circumstances. On the one hand, the number of traditional conflicts and regional problems is increasing, yet, on the other hand, conflicts of other types are occurring, we cannot neglect their impact on international peace and security. Indeed, this demands an increased role for the Security Council and other United Nations bodies and for regional organizations.

Thirdly, regional organizations continue to develop new ways and means to address the growing number of problems and conflicts, in particular with regard to peacekeeping. That is not sufficient, however, because the institutional and legal frameworks are not always adequate. They can be adequate only if the role of these organizations in peacekeeping is enhanced, in particular through cooperation between regional organizations and the Security Council in the areas of training, capacity-building and financing. We are seeing proof of that in Darfur.

Fourthly, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security cannot occur without the restructuring and reform of the United Nations and its institutions. It was my honour to participate in the high-level group that was instructed by the Secretary-General to examine this matter. We believe that the recommendations made with respect to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations could assist us in following the road to international peace and security.

Fifthly, balance between United Nations bodies and their operations under the Charter is an essential principle for reform. In recognizing that, the Security Council assumes the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. At the same time, we should acknowledge that the success of the Economic and Social Council, as well as of the Human Rights Council and other United Nations bodies that operate in the field of development and that implement the purposes and principles of the United Nations, must have a positive impact in order to create an environment conducive to bringing about international peace and security. Therefore, we need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in all areas — economic, social, human rights and the status of women — for more effective maintenance of international peace and security and for producing more tangible results.

Sixthly, Security Council reform must be carried out. I have two suggestions. First, the Council must be reinvigorated and enlarged on the basis of longer and renewable mandates for the Council members. That would enable the Council to have a larger role on the international and regional levels. Secondly, the Council must be reinvigorated with respect to the large ongoing conflicts, particularly between the West and Islam. Such conflicts are not only a clash of cultures and civilizations but also political conflicts that have repercussions on international peace and security. That has caused a number of wars, invasions, violence and terrorism. I do not think, therefore, that they can be resolved only through a dialogue among civilizations but through a comprehensive and responsible treatment, including political aspects, under the auspices and oversight of the Security Council.

I do not need to tell you, Madam President, that the United Nations and the Arab League were established at the same time. The Arab League has been the regional twin of the United Nations since their inception in 1945, and they have since faced the same difficulties and challenges. The Arab League has developed its tools and now has a Peace and Security Council, among other instruments. It invites involvement from different people in its work, becoming a more transparent organization. We are convinced that cooperation between the Arab League and the United Nations, as well as the other regional organizations — first and foremost the African Union, the European Union and the Organization of American States — will help us to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, a goal all Arab countries and the international community urgently seek.

Finally, in order for the Security Council to maintain its credibility and effectiveness, we call on it to deal with the threats that confront international peace and security with the necessary speed and neutrality. We see that the Council deals with questions that are very sensitive. However, there are other matters that are more sensitive that need to be dealt with more quickly than some of the less serious matters. So we are reminded of the standards that the Council uses in maintaining international peace and security. The Council's credibility would be undermined and its role and that of the United Nations and regional organizations would be diminished.

The Arab League has made an appeal for a Council meeting tomorrow to reinvigorate the peace process and to stop the deterioration of the political and security situation in the region, which could threaten international peace and security. The world could witness the way in which the Council deals with an extremely serious matter, such as that of the Middle East. Will the Council hesitate, or will it assume its responsibilities? I am confident that under your presidency, Madam, the Security Council will be responsible and serious in dealing with this matter.

The President: I invite His Excellency Mr. Karel de Gucht, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, to take the floor.

Mr. De Gucht (*spoke in French*): At the beginning of this year I had an opportunity to present to the Council the highlights of the programme of the Belgian chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). I would like to thank you, Madam, President, for the opportunity to take the floor again today in this very important forum.

I am very pleased with the evolution of the dialogue between the Security Council and regional organizations. This dialogue is particularly useful in strengthening the global security system. Indeed, the security challenges that we all face require consolidated and coordinated action.

(*spoke in English*)

The OSCE is the world's largest and most inclusive regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Its core mandate is to

promote security through cooperation. This is, and should be, a matter of constant attention, continued investment and common responsibility for us as it is for the United Nations. We have built a body of commitments, norms and principles, which bind us together, which we share with the international community, and which guide us in our actions.

There can be no lasting peace and security without respect for democracy, civil liberties and human rights. Conversely, effective and lasting democratic rule is predicated upon stability. There will also be no lasting stability without economic development. That is why we should attach great importance to each and every one of the three dimensions of the comprehensive approach to security that both our organizations share.

The OSCE Permanent Council adopted a declaration on cooperation with the United Nations last March, in response to recent calls from the latter to further strengthen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security, in particular resolution 1631 (2005) and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General.

(*spoke in French*)

In this regard, I am particularly pleased with the productive cooperation with the United Nations in many fields of activity of the OSCE. Thus, the stress that we have placed on the fight against organized crime has made it possible to strengthen our cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and to use the OSCE framework to promote the ratification of the 2002 United Nations Convention on Transnational Crime. This effort has also made it possible to provide specific support to the implementation of this Convention by the participating States of the OSCE.

In the area of transportation, a priority theme this year in the economic sphere, the Belgian chairmanship cooperates closely with the United Nations High Representative for Landlocked Developing Countries and supports the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action approved in Almaty in 2003. I would also like to draw attention to the enhanced cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in implementing legal instruments and norms for the latter.

(*spoke in English*)

Some activities of the OSCE result directly from various Security Council resolutions, for instance in Kosovo and in Georgia. In addition, the OSCE assists in the implementation of Security Council resolutions, for example in the area of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Through these activities, as well as through the transmission of data, evaluations and analyses, the OSCE can provide information and assistance to the Security Council.

We look forward to further developing that cooperation in other fields, for instance, in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, where the OSCE has proved its added value through the work of its specialized institutions and 18 field missions in 16 countries.

Regarding the so-called protracted conflicts in Georgia-South Ossetia, Nagorny Karabakh and Moldova-Transdniestra, the OSCE offers its good offices to the parties to prevent escalation and to create the right conditions for a peaceful settlement. Naturally, although the ultimate responsibility for finding solutions lies with the parties themselves, the OSCE and its Chairman-in-Office will avail themselves of every opportunity to move the peace processes in those conflicts forward and to assist the parties in reaching a solution.

I should also like to underline the OSCE's strong record in the field of human rights, including protecting minorities, preserving freedom of the media, promoting tolerance and furthering democracy. The High Commissioner on National Minorities, for example, is the organization's main tool for identifying ethnic tensions between and within member States.

Furthermore, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has an important role not only in election monitoring but also in assisting countries in furthering democratic development and human rights.

The OSCE's Forum for Security and Cooperation acts as the keeper of disarmament treaties and confidence-building measures. Since 2002, the annual Security Review Conference has grown into a comprehensive forum for security dialogue within the OSCE area. Through its regular contacts and meetings with Asian and Mediterranean partners for cooperation, the OSCE also encourages the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures. It is also engaged in capacity-building activities related to out-

of-region organizations, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is ready to continue and expand the sharing of its experience with interested organizations.

(*spoke in French*)

In assuming the chairmanship of the OCSE, Belgium wanted to clearly show its commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation. Promoting close cooperation between our two organizations is an integral part of that commitment.

On behalf of the OSCE, I have the honour of reaffirming our support for that partnership.

The President: I invite His Excellency Mr. Vladimir B. Rushaylo, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, to take the floor.

Mr. Rushaylo (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation to the Security Council for the invitation to participate in this meeting on regional organizations.

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is actively participating in this process. We deem this initiative extremely important and timely, given that the important objective of such forums is to strengthen and fine-tune the capacities of the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The 2005 world summit opened the way for further work in that area. World leaders supported the idea of strengthening ties between the United Nations and regional organizations and decided to involve the relevant regional organizations in the work of the Security Council.

At its meeting last year with the heads of regional organizations, the Security Council adopted resolution 1631 (2005), by which the Council emphasized the potential role of regional organizations in addressing issues related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, notes the efforts made in the fight against terrorism, and urges all relevant regional organizations to enhance the effectiveness of their counter-terrorism efforts.

Small arms and light weapons in the hands of terrorists and various criminal groups is an extremely dangerous factor that promotes destabilization, leading to conflict situations involving open armed resistance.

Important means of combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons include the universal United Nations Convention against Transnational and Organized Crime; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition; and the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In the framework of the implementation of those instruments, the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States on 19 September 2003 took a decision on the means of supervision of international transfers of "Igla" and "Strela" type portable Zenithal-rocket complexes by CIS Member States, which stipulates that there must be an exchange of information in all cases involving the transfer and acquisition of Zenithal-rocket complexes on the basis of the bilateral and multilateral agreements that have been concluded.

The CIS countries are currently working on a draft statement on the combat against the illicit trade in weapons, which will give concrete expression to the measures contained in the Programme of Action, to be implemented at the regional level.

Terrorism is among the most dangerous challenges facing the world. In 1999 we signed a cooperation agreement on counter-terrorism among the CIS countries that forms the legal basis for the relevant CIS bodies to implement various measures that will help them identify, suppress and investigate acts of terrorism.

In 2000, the first programme of the member States of the CIS was adopted to fight terrorism, which will require major efforts on the part of CIS countries aimed at eliminating this scourge. At the same time, CIS States have stepped up their efforts to accede to the 12 counter-terrorism conventions of the United Nations to combat international terrorism and to implement the relevant provisions contained in our legislation.

The summit of CIS heads of State held in September 2004 considered the issue of further developments in cooperation among CIS countries aimed at countering terrorism and any other current threats and challenges to peace and stability in the light of the agreements reached within the framework of the CIS, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations. Following their

discussions, the heads of State of the CIS countries adopted a declaration whereby they proposed the convening of a special meeting of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee with international organizations and CIS countries, which was held on 26 and 27 January 2005 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The cooperative programme among the CIS countries aimed at fighting international terrorism and any other forms and manifestations of extremism was reaffirmed for the 2005-2007 period as well. That programme calls for, inter alia, developing cooperation with international organizations in this area.

The implementation of those universal and regional treaties and programmes and the stepping up of efforts to fight terrorism will contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The CIS has consistently been and remains open to cooperating with the United Nations and regional organizations in countering existing threats and challenges.

The President: I invite Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to take the floor.

Mr. Ihsanoglu: It gives me great pleasure to address this unique and much-needed meeting on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which encompasses 57 countries.

We are grateful to the Foreign Minister of Greece for having taken the initiative of bringing us together to exchange views on the very important subject of international peace and security.

I should like also to highlight the importance of the ideas contained in the letter dated 6 September prepared by the Permanent Representative of Greece, and I would like to highlight the paragraph concerning the importance of revising the use of the terminology concerning regional and subregional organizations.

I would like also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the excellent report before us.

Today, as we try from an analytical perspective to understand the problems of the world, of which quite a number involve the Muslim world, we see that those problems continue to worsen and that the scope of the crises is widening. It seems that the monodimensional approach to tackling crises is leading to further complexities. When problems are approached solely from the angle of security and solutions are sought only through military means, those problems cannot be solved in a lasting and comprehensive manner. On the contrary, they become harder to solve. Short cuts and short-term solutions further complicate the problems and increase their vehemence.

Therefore, if we support the effective, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of crises, the need arises for a paradigm shift in our approaches. That requires us to understand that political grievances, backwardness, the underdeveloped situation of societies and their need for good governance are the underlying reasons for the problems we are trying to solve.

When we are resolved to act to settle disputes and conflicts; when sound measures are taken by the international community by upholding respect for international legitimacy; and when we focus on long-term prospects with patience and wisdom instead of resorting to the logic of intervention, we will move towards a more stable, secure and developed world where cooperation and dialogue win out over unilateralism and division.

For its part, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), in cooperation with the international community, is promoting moderation, modernization and development within the Islamic world. Also, with a new emphasis on development issues, it is aligning its 10-year programme of action, which was adopted at the last OIC extraordinary summit in Mecca in December 2005, with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. The programme of action includes the OIC's proactive involvement in all stages of conflict management, as well as combating international terrorism. I am pleased to inform the Council that the OIC has taken several initiatives related to various conflict situations, including in Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon and elsewhere.

In the field of development and peacebuilding, the OIC and its specialized organ, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), are playing an active and constructive role in various places. The OIC and IDB can closely coordinate with the recently established United Nations Peacebuilding Commission in achieving common objectives, starting particularly in Sierra Leone, where the OIC Trust Fund for

Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Humanitarian Assistance, as well as the IDB, are actively undertaking numerous projects. The OIC stands ready to further cooperate with the United Nations and all other international, intergovernmental, regional and transnational organizations with a view to making the maximum possible contribution to world peace and security.

I should like to emphasize here the importance of the political engagement in and support of the world's leaders for dialogue, mutual recognition, respect and cooperation among the representatives of cultures, civilizations and religions, as that issue has gained in importance recently due to its implications for and repercussions on international peace and security.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the need to reinvigorate the time-tested doctrine of multilateralism to promote international peace and security. It is only through cooperation on an equal, equitable and just basis that the objectives of international peace and security, as well as of social and economic development, can be achieved.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to take the floor.

Mr. De Hoop Scheffer: I thank you first of all, Sir, for your very good initiative and for your invitation to participate in this important debate.

Let me make some comments about cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and other intergovernmental bodies from a NATO perspective.

It goes without saying that NATO nations are deeply committed to the United Nations. In the Treaty of Washington, which founded NATO, the allies reaffirmed their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and acknowledged the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. Consequently, NATO has already made and, indeed, continues to make a significant contribution, in particular by leading operations under a United Nations mandate.

NATO's experiences of cooperation with the United Nations include the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, defusing the crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, stabilizing the situation in Kosovo, providing security and assistance in Afghanistan, training and equipping the security forces in Iraq, providing humanitarian assistance in Pakistan, and assisting with training and logistical support both the United Nations and the African Union in the Sudan.

Drawing on those experiences, NATO has learned valuable lessons about its own structures, procedures and capabilities, which we are now addressing. But NATO has also learned some important lessons that, I believe, have wider relevance, in particular to cooperation with the United Nations, as well as with other regional organizations and intergovernmental bodies.

First of all, it is clear that each organization has different strengths and that these need to be complemented and mutually reinforced. NATO offers unparalleled military experience and capability, yet addressing a conflict requires a coordinated and coherent approach from the outset. Clearly defined responsibilities regarding the political, military, economic, development cooperation and other challenges of a conflict are indispensable if we are to maximize our chances of success.

I saw for myself only two weeks ago in Afghanistan how important that lesson is. NATO, through its International Security Assistance Force, is certainly a key enabler in that country, but the military contribution to stabilizing that country is not an end in itself. If we wish to prevent Afghanistan from falling back under Taliban rule and exporting fanatical terrorism, then all actors with an interest in the well-being of that country need to reinvigorate their efforts to create a strong and sustainable Afghanistan.

(spoke in French)

My second observation concerns the role of Member States. We often forget this, but our organizations' ability to act depends directly on the political involvement of nations and the will to contribute — in the case of NATO, financially and militarily — to conflict management. In the framework of our respective organizations, we therefore need to recall the importance of striking a balance between collective political will and the means provided us by nations.

Thirdly, there is a need to find a just balance between the responsibilities of the various international

actors and those of local actors. That balance is, of course, a function of the type of conflict, but I also feel that the international organizations have an interest in promoting, as speedily and as fully as possible, the appropriation of the peace, stabilization and reconstruction processes by the people and authorities of the countries in question. Substitution is sometimes indispensable, unfortunately, but it must not be seen as an easy way out, lest it undermine the final objective of timely disengagement.

My final comment is that we need to maintain the support of public opinion, without which the political basis of our interventions and the resources we enjoy decline. It is therefore the responsibility of all of our organizations to explain the basis of what is often a long-term commitment. It would be beneficial for us to demonstrate to the general public and to those who finance us an exemplary spirit of cooperation and solidarity among organizations.

I would like to conclude by welcoming the recent establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. It is an important step towards instituting real teamwork at the international level, and NATO is ready to contribute to its work. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, have the primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Regional organizations and other intergovernmental bodies have a responsibility to assist. NATO will continue to play its role in that collective effort.

The President: I invite His Excellency Mr. Nikolai Bordyuzha, Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, to take the floor.

Mr. Bordyuzha (*spoke in Russian*): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak at this important and representative forum. We welcome efforts aimed at achieving closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations while maintaining a logical division of labour and preserving the prerogatives of the United Nations and the Security Council.

We fully agree with the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "A regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities" (S/2006/590). We are sure that their implementation will enhance our collective potential in the areas of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, disarmament and non-proliferation. We support increased cooperation with regional organizations in resolving conflicts, provided that there is a clear understanding that the Security Council must play the main role in the process, in full conformity with the Charter.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization is taking capacity-building steps in this regard by establishing its own peacekeeping operations, which will contribute to United Nations peace operations. Regional organizations can play an important role in implementing a peacebuilding strategy, including within the Peacebuilding Commission. We support more extensive use of that specialized body within the United Nations system. We also believe that key international organizations must cooperate more closely with regional organizations and play a coordinating role in their respective fields of activity, making practical recommendations, providing information, consulting regional agencies and providing expert and technical assistance.

At the same time, there is a need for closer coordination of efforts between regional organizations, especially between those that carry out similar tasks and functions and operate in the same region. In this regard, I would like to support the Secretary-General's idea of establishing a web-based databank of practices and capacities of regional partner organizations of the United Nations and agencies in the United Nations system in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. That would help them to more effectively coordinate and avoid duplicating their efforts. Those efforts would also be more effective if regional organizations considered committing themselves to inform the United Nations as soon as the threat of a conflict situation emerged within the area of their responsibility. I propose the establishment of a similar mechanism to coordinate counter-terrorism activities through United Nations bodies.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are all pursuing the same goal: to make the world more stable and secure. Increasing United Nations cooperation with regional organizations will contribute to the achievement of that goal. There is no other choice for the international community if conflict is to be prevented.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, to take the floor.

Mr. Davis: I should like to begin by thanking the Greek presidency of the Security Council for having organized today's debate.

The contribution of the Council of Europe to maintaining international peace and stability is based on the concept of democratic security. The Council of Europe is reinforcing continent-wide stability across its 46 member States through adherence to democratic values and the acceptance of legal standards, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. We believe that freedom and security are inseparable and that one cannot exist without the other.

Our concept of democratic security is anchored in a system of legally binding treaties. Compliance with obligations is regularly monitored and, in the case of the European Convention on Human Rights, enforced through the European Court of Human Rights.

When it comes to the fight against terrorism, the Council of Europe has adopted a set of conventions providing for new means to diminish the capacity of terrorists to strike wherever or whenever they choose. These new treaties establish as criminal offences a number of acts which may lead to acts of terrorism, such as incitement, recruitment and training. They also reinforce cooperation in the prevention of terrorism by modifying existing extradition and mutual assistance arrangements between those countries which are parties to the conventions. Finally, these new provisions reinforce the protection and compensation regime for the victims of terrorism.

The foundations of this anti-terrorist policy, namely, measures to prevent the erosion of human rights, are motivated by the same imperative — that is, the protection of our citizens and the citizens of other countries on other continents. The most effective anti-terrorist policy is one which stops more terrorists than it helps to recruit, and this is why our response to terrorism is as fair as it is robust. Our promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue focuses on the root causes of terrorism and completes our threefold approach to this global threat.

That third point also shows that the Council of Europe's contribution to building peace and security is not limited to standard-setting and adopting legal instruments. In addition, we are currently running three campaigns which cover global areas of concern and which are also high on the United Nations agenda for promoting human security.

The Council of Europe has launched a campaign to combat trafficking in human beings. In parallel with that, we have launched a three-year programme for the promotion of children's rights and the protection of children from violence. At the same time, we are running a youth campaign on diversity, human rights and participation, under the slogan "All Different, All Equal". Its objective is to engage people in the effort to eradicate racism, discrimination and intolerance, which unfortunately persist and even flourish in many parts of Europe. In spite of its geographical scope, the message of the campaign is universal.

Post-conflict rehabilitation is another important part of our work. Kosovo is a case in point. The Council of Europe has been working closely with Mr. Martti Ahtisaari and his team in areas such as decentralization, constitutional law, human rights and cultural heritage. Other successful examples of our work are the arrangements with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on the implementation of our Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and with UNMIK and NATO on the implementation of the monitoring mechanisms of our Committee for the Prevention of Torture. Since, whatever its future status, Kosovo will remain a part of Europe, we believe that everyone living there should be protected by the European Convention on Human Rights.

To conclude, I will turn briefly to some of the points raised in section C of the discussion paper (S/2006/719, annex) circulated by the Greek presidency for this meeting.

As regards the general relationship between the United Nations and the Council of Europe and between the United Nations and the many other intergovernmental bodies represented here, I think we all agree that it is the responsibility of the United Nations to maintain peace and security worldwide and that there is an obvious link between regional security and global security.

While I welcome the idea of clarifying the respective roles of various bodies — possibly through framework agreements with the United Nations — I would hope that we could also develop a results-

oriented approach and not waste time and energy on semantic discussions and attempts to categorize organizations that cannot be categorized. We are all unique, with special features reflecting history, geography and mission.

At the end of the day, what really matters is the political will and the ability of each organization to deliver. What is needed is more action, not more words.

The President: Owing to time constraints, His Excellency Mr. Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, will not be able to deliver his statement in person at this meeting. However, his delegation will submit the statement to be issued as a document of the Security Council.

The Security Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council concerning the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, the statement by the President will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2006/39.

Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all participants in this fruitful joint exercise aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5530

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5530th meeting

Thursday, 21 September 2006, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Bakoyannis	(Greece)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Taiana
	China	Mr. Li Zhaoxing
	Congo	Mr. Adada
	Denmark	Mr. Moeller
	France	Mr. Douste-Blazy
	Ghana	Nana Akufo-Addo
	Japan	Mr. Arima
	Peru	Mr. García Belaunde
	Qatar	Sheikh Al-Thani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovakia	Mr. Kubiš
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mrs. Beckett
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Migiro
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 30 August 2006 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/700)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-52982 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 30 August 2006 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/700)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bahrain, Finland and Israel in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 September 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2006/752 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council being held on Thursday, 21 September 2006, regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Executive Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, to participate in the meeting in accordance with the Council's provisional rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/700, which contains a letter dated 30 August 2006 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I invite the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: Like no other conflict, the Arab-Israeli conflict carries a powerful symbolic and emotional charge for people throughout the world. The narratives of the two sides — dispossession, prolonged occupation and denial of statehood on one side, terrorism and existential threats on the other — stir the fears and passions of people of many nations. And our continued failure to resolve this conflict calls into question the legitimacy and the effectiveness of the Security Council itself.

The events of this summer have reminded us all how dangerous it is to leave the broader Arab-Israeli conflict unresolved and how interconnected the region's problems are. At the same time, the role of the Security Council in bringing about the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah and charting the way towards a sustainable ceasefire through resolution 1701 (2006) showed that it can play a vital role in the search for peace in the region. Resolution 1701 (2006) rightly stressed the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all the Council's earlier relevant resolutions. To do this, we must make progress on the issue at the heart of the conflict, which is the problem of Israel and Palestine.

Large majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians desire peace. What they desperately need is a bridge to enable them to reach peace from their present sad state of conflict. The bridge to peace must be wide enough to accommodate all who have a legitimate stake in the process, long enough to span the enormous gulf of mistrust that separates the parties and strong enough to withstand the efforts that will inevitably be made to sabotage it.

Yesterday, I stressed to my Quartet partners that the existing bridge to peace is badly in need of repair. Its foundations seem weak, since both parties have failed to take the concrete actions needed to meet their existing obligations. And the destination on the far side — an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and a secure Israel at peace with all its neighbours,

including a new Palestinian State — remains distant, ill-defined and, for many, almost unimaginable.

Today we are dealing with a difficult situation in Gaza, where we see closures and a Palestinian Authority that is starved of resources. Palestinian schools, ministries and other institutions are now in sharp decline. Palestinian society is rapidly becoming poorer. If this were to continue and the Palestinian Authority were to collapse, the consequent fragmentation and radicalization of Palestinian society would be a terrible, perhaps irreversible, strategic setback.

Today, Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank living under occupation have neither a State nor a functioning government. Is it any wonder that they look to the international community for protection, for help and for hope? And if this is not forthcoming, the young people of Palestine will, sadly, be attracted by the false promises of those who advocate violence.

For their part, Israelis rightly demand an end to rocket attacks against the towns and kibbutzim of southern Israel, the return of the soldier captured on 25 June and a Palestinian Authority that accepts basic principles of peace and takes credible action to prevent attacks against Israel. Yet in the absence of a political process, which is the only way of bringing about lasting peace, Israelis naturally look to their own military to deal with security threats.

It would be easy for the international community to declare that the parties are not ready for dialogue and that until they are there is little that can be done. But that would be deeply disappointing. It would also be unfair to the parties themselves.

Poll after poll shows that people on both sides understand that there is no military solution to the conflict. These same polls show that people understand that a two-State solution cannot be achieved through unilateral actions by either side. I am convinced that both the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Olmert, and the Palestinian President, Mr. Abbas, understand these realities and are searching for a way forward. I send both of them my strong support, as the Quartet did yesterday.

The Quartet also encouraged efforts to form a Palestinian national unity government, in the hope that the programme of such a government will reflect Quartet principles and facilitate early engagement by the international community. President Abbas's wisdom in pursuing this path must be recognized. So must the efforts of Palestinian Prime Minister Haniyeh.

During the meeting, I also reminded my Quartet partners that the Quartet itself must be more active and effective if confidence in the peace process is to be restored. I am glad to say the Quartet agreed that greater engagement is crucial — on the ground, with the parties and in the region.

But the test will be action. The parties must now rise to their responsibilities; so must the Quartet and our partners in the region; and so must the Security Council. With all the tools at our disposal, let us work together to put in place a credible political process based on dialogue, parallel implementation of obligations, monitoring of performance and clarity as to the end goal. The time has come to rebuild the shattered bridge to peace.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now invite His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, to take the floor.

Shaikh Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): May I, at the outset, Madam, warmly congratulate you and your friendly country, Greece, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank you for your efforts that culminated in holding this meeting. I would also like to commend your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Ghana, for his efficiency, dedicated efforts and successful work during his tenure as President.

This historic meeting of the Security Council constitutes an important precedent in the annals of the Arab-Israeli conflict, a conflict that must be terminated. The Council is meeting today at a high level and upon a collective Arab initiative to consider the situation in the Middle East at a time when the peace process threatens to come to a halt.

I have the honour to address the Council, on behalf of all members of the League of Arab States, concerning a very serious and dangerous situation which affects not only the Middle East region but the entire world: the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States sought to come to the Security Council to discuss the peace process and present its case in order to shoulder its responsibilities

and play its role in contributing to the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region and the world as a whole.

This new position by the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States was initiated for the sake of future generations in the region. Our aim is to have a stable and secure Middle East in which hostility is replaced with friendship and prosperity for its people. Such friendship and prosperity will not be exclusive to the region, but would also benefit the entire world.

In the past, we have witnessed the horrors and repercussions of war. However, our peoples are determined today not to see the continuation of such horrors. They are determined to build peace and confidence among all the peoples of the Middle East. In his statement to the General Assembly on Tuesday, 19 September, the Secretary-General referred to the situation in the Middle East in the following terms, which he echoed again today.

(*spoke in English*)

> "This climate of fear and suspicion is constantly refuelled by the violence in the Middle East. We might like to think of the Arab-Israeli conflict as just one regional conflict amongst many. But it is not. No other conflict carries such a powerful symbolic and emotional charge among people far removed from the battlefield."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

The persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict has had dire consequences and is exhausting the resources of the region. It is creating instability. It is also allowing extremist forces to flourish. The Arab States are therefore deeply concerned over the continuation of this conflict which creates serious consequences for regional peace and security. Therefore, the Arab world firmly believes in the urgent need to bring the conflict to a peaceful resolution.

It is important to create an environment conducive to peace in the region. That would require open-mindedness on all sides so as to encourage negotiation and discussions among them. Our objective is peace and stability for the region, not conflict and turmoil. We ought to work for reconciliation and conciliation. We should act to heal the wounds which have accumulated for over 50 years.

At the most recent ministerial-level session of the League of Arab States, the 126th session, we reached an agreement to undertake this démarche before this body at the ministerial level in order to end the current stalemate in the peace process due to the lack of progress, with its adverse consequences for regional stability and security.

Our objective in calling for this meeting is not to apportion blame or to exchange accusations. It is rather to address the situation in the Middle East in a constructive spirit and in a forward-looking manner, with the aim of reviving the peace process through direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict. The Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States is convinced that now is the appropriate time to relaunch the peace process. It is an important opportunity to end the current stalemate.

In our view, reviving the peace process could mean reinvigorating the road map, which contains the elements of a lasting peace, and restoring it to its right track, implementing relevant Security Council resolutions, namely, resolution 242 (1967) up to resolution 1515 (2003) and the principle of land for peace, as well as implementing the Arab initiative, while, at the same time, devising a new and carefully developed mechanism to implement the road map and put the peace process back on track.

Allow me to emphasize that the main elements of the Arab initiative are as follows: the Arab States are prepared to consider that it is possible to bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict; they are prepared to enter into a peace agreement between themselves and Israel; they are prepared to establish normal and full relations with Israel in the context of a comprehensive peace which requires: full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories; arriving at a just and agreed solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III); and acceptance of the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile, the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States proposes that the Security Council agree on the following elements in order to revive the peace process: initiate negotiations between the parties, based on the agreed terms of reference, with a set time frame, assisted by the international community and under the auspices of the Security Council; request the Secretary-

General, in close consultation with all parties concerned, including the parties to the conflict, the States of the region and the Quartet, to prepare a report on appropriate mechanisms for resuming direct negotiations between the parties, including, inter alia, options for format, guarantees, time limits, parameters and the role of the Security Council and other third parties, and to submit this report to the Security Council, request that the Security Council remain actively seized of the matter and reconvene upon submission of the aforementioned report at the ministerial level in order to consider further measures.

The determination of all the parties to end the conflict, with the necessary assistance from the Security Council, would help in building genuine and just peace in the region. We have a good chance now to obtain peace and should not allow it to slip away. If we lose this chance, we will all be losers. We sincerely hope that the Council, within its mandate to maintain international peace and security, will pave the way for peace negotiations. We welcome the assistance of third parties in this endeavour. We wish those efforts every success in bringing peace, which is the precondition for stability, prosperity and development in the Middle East, and the world.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dan Gillerman, Permanent Representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I wish to thank you personally, Madam President, for the goodwill, initiative, energy, creativity and consideration you have shown over the last few weeks and especially over the last few days towards the convening of this meeting. Israel knows that this meeting is convened by people who want peace and who genuinely desire to see peace in our region.

However, as some members know, including you, Madam President, Israel was unsure, practically until the last minute, whether to attend this meeting. Our experience has shown that this forum is not always helpful in advancing peace, but rather, that it may generate acrimony. I have been instructed nevertheless by my Minister to update you on developments from our perspective.

As you know, just a few days ago, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni met with Chairman Abbas in what was a very good meeting in which we agreed to re-energize the dialogue between us and create a permanent channel to pursue ways to advance the process together. We agreed also that progress must be based on the road map and the principles for peace that have been agreed between the parties. We believe that we reached this understanding because, knowing the many difficulties we currently face, both sides recognize that we do not need another forum for acting out our differences and that the only forum for resolving them is the bilateral negotiating table.

We all know that there is a common vision for peace that binds together Israelis, moderate Palestinians, the moderates in our region and the international community. It is embodied in the road map endorsed by the international community, and it was reaffirmed only yesterday by the Quartet, of which the United Nations itself is part. At its heart is the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Yesterday Foreign Minister Livni spoke before the General Assembly and reaffirmed Israel's belief in that vision and the principles of peace that stem from it. Israel is committed to being a partner for peace. Believe me, nobody wants peace more than we do. The people of Israel have shown that time and again. We know that the dangers to peace will not be overcome by military means alone. Stagnation is not in our interest, and it is not our policy. We want to realize the two-State vision as envisaged in the road map. It is for that reason that we embarked on the painful process of disengagement last year, in order to create opportunity for progress. But sadly — tragically — what we received in return was terror.

It is for that reason that we are committed to the process of dialogue with all Palestinians who believe in mutual compromise and historic reconciliation. If we have not yet turned that vision of peace into reality it is not for lack of meetings in the Council. It is not for lack of agreements or resolutions or international conferences. I want to believe that all those gathered at this table know the true obstacles to progress. I believe they know, as we do, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the consequence, and not the cause, of the ideology of intolerance and hatred that plagues our region and has taken control of the Palestinian Authority in the form of Hamas.

That is not a reality that can just be ignored. It cannot be swept away by vague formulations and half measures. The road map and the three international

conditions are designed precisely to confront the enemies of peace and ensure that the future Palestinian State envisaged by the two-State solution is not a terror State that perpetuates the conflict, but a peaceful State that ends it. Discarding the building blocks of peace will not speed up the process, it will simply ensure that the edifice of peace will crumble and fall. Our goal must be to rekindle the road map process without reigniting the conflict. That requires that we act with urgency, but not with recklessness. It requires that we not confuse paper with progress or form with substance. And, most of all, it requires genuine consultation, negotiation and agreement between the parties themselves. There is no other way. Any progress begins with a genuine dialogue among those committed to peace. It begins with the release of Israeli hostages and an end to all terrorist attacks. It begins with a renewal of our commitment to the two-State solution and an acceptance of the basic principle that each people's rights are to be realized in their own homeland, not in the homeland of others.

There is much those in the region can do to support that process, but it is not about more initiatives or United Nations meetings. It is, first and foremost, about commitment to prepare the people of the region for the price of peace, to accept the true meaning of the two-State solution and to teach all the children of the Middle East the values of tolerance and the blessings of coexistence.

Sometimes tragedy is not just the pain we suffer but also the opportunity we miss. The contours of the agreement we have to reach are clear, and have been for decades. The tragedy is that the lack of genuine commitment to true coexistence means that the people of the region are still waiting, when we could have enjoyed the benefits of peace long ago. But it is not too late, if we have the courage to see that there is more that binds us together than tears us apart. It is not too late to turn hope into reality. It is not too late to march on that road to peace, but only if we have the strength to defend its agreed principles and the courage to confront its enemies.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank Greece for the important role it has played.

I was happy to hear my friend the representative of Israel say that they have agreed with the Palestinians on holding direct talks. It is our hope that those talks will lead to prompt results. I believe that words are important but that deeds are more important.

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the members of the Council for granting the Arab request to hold this meeting to discuss the question of peace in the Middle East in its various dimensions. That question is not new to the Council, the United Nations or to those working in international relations at the bilateral, regional and international levels.

That being the case, it is only logical to ask a simple and central question: why has this matter remained for almost 60 years without a solution that is satisfactory to the parties concerned? Does the reason lie in the lack of international resolutions that are an embodiment of international law and that can ensure that solution? Can the solution be achieved through the implementation of such resolutions? Is the persistence of the question dictated by the interests of one party or another so that the continuing conflict can be used in the service of ulterior motives? Are we and the international community unable to provide a solution?

Providing exact answers to those questions and others in a meeting such as this is no doubt important. However, what is more important is that we recognize some basic tenets that are binding on us all without exception, because we find their essential justification in our commitments under the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which we committed ourselves to comply with in our international relations.

Since its inception, the Organization was intended to achieve international peace and security and to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all peoples. Yet those objectives have still not been achieved as regards the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. With the passage of time, that has led to catastrophic repercussions for all aspects of the situation in the region. Occupation has been extended to the territories of others, together with its attendant human suffering for millions, which is rejected by both

legal and moral precepts. Arsenals grew, the problems of human development worsened and enormous financial resources were squandered on military expenditures instead of being devoted to improving the lives of peoples and giving them hope for a dignified life.

Even more serious than all of that is the fact that this situation has been conducive to the growth of extremism, rancour and hatred, which has led to violence and terrorism as a means of achieving rights, without regard for the lives of Palestinians, Arabs, Israelis and others whose countries and societies have been plagued by terrorism perpetrated under various pretexts. How could it be otherwise, when this prolonged conflict has yet to be resolved, when credibility has been lost and commitments have been shirked?

It is not my intention to criticize, accuse or cast aspersions. Rather, my concern is to underscore the bare facts candidly and transparently. On the one hand, it is not Israel alone that is entitled to the legitimate right to live in peace and security in the region. The Palestinian and Arab sides are also entitled to that. On the other hand, the Palestinian and Arab sides have affirmed for quite some time, through their positions and conduct, that they desire and are vigorously seeking the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace so that everyone can live in dignity.

The problem at hand does not need a magic solution and neither side can, in my opinion, come up with an innovative solution because the solution is known to all and sundry. It is the principle of land for peace, which is based on the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel, which President George Bush referred to in his address to the General Assembly two days ago and which is clearly established in the resolutions and legitimate terms of reference, which are binding on Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab side in general. Those were endorsed by the Security Council and provided the basis for the approach adopted by the international parties, especially the Quartet, with the support of the international community.

Hence, just and fair solutions are not impossible provided that there are good intentions and political will based on sincere and earnest compliance by all with the norms of international law. We also feel that it is not possible to address the other political, security and development problems in the region without first achieving an honourable and satisfactory solution to this question.

The peace that we seek must be sustainable and there must therefore be an integrated approach that embraces political reform, democratization and human development. In that regard, the responsibility for establishing a just and comprehensive peace falls not exclusively on the parties directly concerned, but also on the international community, especially those States that are influential in international relations, foremost among which are the five permanent members of the Security Council. The responsibility is a shared one because the interest in establishing peace is shared and because we are all bound by the provisions of the Charter.

In view of all that, we welcome the meeting of the Quartet held yesterday and look forward to its presenting specific ideas to develop effective and purposeful mechanisms for a prompt resumption of the direct negotiations among the parties and on all tracks in order to achieve, within a specific time frame, a comprehensive, just and permanent settlement on the basis of international resolutions and legitimate terms of reference, most prominent among which is the road map. To that end, the momentum necessary for the continuation of the peace process must be maintained regardless of the prevailing political climate. We also call upon the international community to support this endeavour, to seek to overcome the obstacles that impede the peace process, and to provide the required guarantees, in addition to the necessary incentives, to implement the agreements achieved.

I should like to note here the efforts of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to form a Government of national unity. We call on all to support those endeavours.

From our perspective, dialogue is an essential part of the peace process. We therefore participated in the alliance of civilizations initiative and sponsored meetings on dialogue among religions, including the Jewish religion. We knew that we could be criticized by some, but that did not stop us from acting because we understand the importance of dialogue.

I should like to refer to an extremely important point. Our serious resolve to make effective efforts for the sake of peace must not be thwarted by any action aimed at subverting our common effort. We are a

nation that seeks a just peace and not a violent one. All fair-minded people can grasp that from our civilization and our cultural and religious heritage. At the same time, we are aware that a large majority in Israel shares our desire for peace, irrespective of provocations and sacrifices. I recall what Yitzhak Rabin said in the Knesset in 1993: "We are destined to live together on the same soil in the same land". I know that quoting the words of Rabin will cause me to be criticized in my country, but they are words of truth.

We have to realize that we cannot choose our neighbours or our enemies. The question now is: Are we ready to face the challenge of this issue with a sense of responsibility in order to secure peace, security, stability, justice and equity for the States and the peoples of the Middle East, including Israel? Success in achieving the desired peace is success for everyone, and failure to do so honours no one. We should no longer squander this opportunity as we have in the past.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): Denmark welcomes this opportunity to discuss how to address the urgent and serious situation in the Middle East. The momentum created by our common efforts to end the hostilities in Lebanon and to put in place a process leading to lasting peace must be used to revive the Middle East peace process. Against that backdrop, we welcome yesterday's Quartet meeting and fully associate ourselves with its statement.

There is an urgent need to give the people of the region a reason to hope. Their growing sense of desperation must be overcome. That can happen only if they are given a credible prospect of a better future.

My recent meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders have been encouraging. My clear impression is that both sides recognize the urgent need to revive the peace process and are ready to do so. The international community must do everything possible to assist them in that endeavour and to provide the incentives needed to foster the lasting peace we all want.

We already have the framework in place. Over long years, we have developed a basis for achieving lasting peace. It includes the Arab peace initiative, the performance-based road map for a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as relevant Security Council resolutions, all based on the principle of land for peace. That framework, agreed upon through arduous negotiations, offers the best foundation for achieving our goal. It must continue to be our guidepost as we try to revive the peace process.

The underlying premise of the road map is that the two sides will take a series of simultaneous and parallel steps leading to peace. Even if the time frame, of course, needs to be revisited, the principles and the sequencing it lays down remain as relevant as ever.

The ongoing efforts by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to form a Government of national unity are welcome and I hope they will be successful. It is also my hope that the new Government's political platform will reflect the Quartet principles and allow for early engagement. President Abbas' efforts in that regard can be successful only with strong and committed support from the international community. Therefore, Denmark is committed to providing financial assistance to President Abbas. I am also encouraged by the prospects of a meeting between President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert in the near future with a view to restarting the peace process. To be successful, those negotiations must be accompanied by an end to violence.

Moreover, the captured Israeli soldiers must be released, and the Palestinian ministers and legislators in Israeli custody must be immediately freed.

Urgent attention must be paid to humanitarian conditions in the Palestinian territories. We welcome the generous contributions made this month at the Stockholm international donor conference and the decision to extend and expand the temporary international mechanism. At the same time, Israel should release the Palestinian tax and customs revenues it is withholding and keep open all border crossings. And all Palestinian factions must immediately stop their attacks, just as all Israeli military activities in the Palestinian territories must cease.

In conclusion, I encourage the parties to do everything within their power to seize this moment now that the world is again focused on Middle East peace. The international community must and, I sincerely hope, will provide full support to their efforts. I pledge that Denmark will not waver from its commitment to continuing to do everything possible to

achieve the ultimate goal — a lasting peace in the Middle East in which all States are living side by side in peace and security and where all peoples can prosper and freely develop their societies.

The President: I shall now give the floor to His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana.

Nana Akufo-Addo (Ghana): Ghana commends the delegation of Greece, the League of Arab States and you personally, Madam President, for organizing this important meeting giving us yet another opportunity to critically examine the options for advancing the quest for a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the Middle East. The tragic consequences of the failure of previous peace initiatives were enacted recently in Lebanon. Now that the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) is under way and the people of Lebanon have begun to rebuild their country after the devastating 34-day war, we must seize the new momentum for peace and work towards achieving a meaningful change in the dangerous status quo in the Middle East.

Ghana has always supported a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict that will meet the aspirations of both peoples, alleviating the fear and desperation that breed extremism. A sovereign and independent democratic State of Palestine, with structured and well-functioning institutions, will be better placed to cooperate with Israel and guarantee the State's long-term security.

In our assessment, the current stalemate in the implementation of the road map serves no one's interests. That is why we take a positive view of the moves made by the Palestinians in their efforts to form a Government of national unity. Such a Government could help transform Hamas and bring it into the political mainstream. We also welcome the outcome of yesterday's meeting of the Quartet principals in New York, especially the measures aimed at alleviating the humanitarian conditions in the West Bank and Gaza. These positive developments could be enhanced further through the freeing of hostages and prisoners.

No one disputes that the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East problem. But, in real terms, how does that question translate into the rights and obligations of all interested parties to the Middle East conflict today? The international community must be clear and consistent on these issues and be prepared to hold both parties to their obligations.

All who genuinely believe in the vision of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, must commit equally to the elimination of all direct and indirect threats to the existence and security of Israel. There can be no other path to lasting peace in the Middle East, and we urge the parties to the conflict to muster the courage to compromise and negotiate in good faith for the sake of all the peoples in the region. This is the position of the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor and his Government. It is the duty of the Security Council, together with the Quartet, to provide the necessary leadership.

The President: I shall now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru.

Mr. Garcia Belaunde (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): During the past few months, the situation in the Middle East has suffered one of its gravest crises, causing enormous destruction and death. Peru deeply deplores these facts and considers it necessary to intensify the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We believe that the purpose of this meeting of the Security Council, and also the goal of the concerned regional organizations, should be to help the parties to achieve a peaceful solution.

Although the events of the recent past have been serious, especially for the Lebanese population, there have been some positive reactions that opened new chances for peace. One of them was the approval of resolution 1701 (2006), adopted unanimously by the Security Council, putting an end to the war in Lebanon and northern Israel. We are pleased that that resolution was accepted by the Governments of Israel and Lebanon, and that its implementation, during the last 40 days, has been effective.

We believe that there is much more to do. Nevertheless there are some points that must be highlighted: the steady deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon is going in the right direction, allowing the withdrawal of the occupying Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and the deployment of the Lebanese army, securing these areas for the first time in many decades. The lifting of the air and sea blockade is also a positive development. The

parties involved must continue to respect the cessation of hostilities and to fully observe the Blue Line. It is also essential to intensify the clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance, for which the Government of Israel must provide more detailed information.

The disarming of Hizbollah and the militias operating in Lebanon remains a key element for moving the peace process forward. The presence of armed groups which challenge the State's monopoly on the legitimate use of force throughout Lebanese territory is not acceptable. This requirement, which has been invoked repeatedly since the adoption of the Taif Accords in 1989 and which was reaffirmed in the Lebanese Government's decision of 27 July 2006, must be implemented. To this end, it is also important that the neighbouring countries in the region should collaborate by avoiding the sale or supply of arms and related materiel.

The demarcation of Lebanon's international borders is also urgent, especially in those areas where the border is disputed, including the Sheba'a farms area. We know that the Secretary-General and his envoys are working with the parties on the elements and principles underlying a long-term solution. We look forward to receiving their proposals.

I would like to underscore the efforts being made by the humanitarian agencies and organizations in Lebanon, which continue to do everything in their power to bring aid to those who need it as promptly as possible. I would also like to remind the Council that the crisis situation will continue until the economic and productive activities disrupted in Lebanon are resumed. That is key in a successful rebuilding effort.

Another central problem in the region is the situation of Palestine and the territories occupied by Israel. Peru once again deplores the acts of violence, kidnappings and loss of human lives, together with the critical situation endured by the Palestinian population in the occupied territories. On this issue we agree with the call to strengthen the temporary international mechanism to improve the economic and humanitarian conditions in Gaza and the West Bank. We urge Israel to use the mechanism to transfer the tax and customs revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority.

Furthermore, we reiterate that a negotiated solution for the peaceful coexistence of two States with secure and internationally recognized borders will remain elusive if one of the parties fails to recognize the other's right to exist. Fulfilling the requirements laid down by the Quartet since the beginning of this year — renunciation of violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations — should be understood as marking an end to the phase of violence and confrontation and the beginning of a phase of negotiation and construction, in which the Security Council will be able to play a more effective role.

To this end, and sharing the views expressed by the Quartet yesterday in its statement, we hope that the new Palestinian government of national unity, under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, will reflect and implement these requirements in order to begin a new era.

Finally, Peru believes that the principles contained in the road map remain valid and we reaffirm our commitment to this Council in order to make progress towards a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003).

The President: I shall now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Li Zhaoxing, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

Mr. Li Zhaoxing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to offer my congratulations on the convening of this meeting, which is the result of the concerted efforts of all parties concerned. China has all along fully supported this initiative by the League of Arab States.

The Middle East used to be a land of peace and tranquility — a land of milk and honey. Yet during the past half century, it has been awash in blood and tears, ravaged by war and hostilities. This is a challenge to human conscience.

China welcomes the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006). The resolution represents an important step towards settling the Lebanese-Israeli conflict and must be fully implemented. China calls for an early expansion and deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and is ready to contribute additional troops to it. We have already begun to honour our commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to Lebanon and will continue to do so. We urge all parties to extend a helping hand to the Lebanese people. More importantly, the

international community should urge Israel and Lebanon to reach a long-term political solution, beat their swords into ploughshares, and live in peace.

The Middle East peace process is stalled, but peace is not out of reach. The process must be revived, and to that end I wish to make the following proposals.

First, we must respect history and face reality. History teaches us lessons, while reality gives us the key to creating the future. To settle the question of the Middle East, full consideration should be given to its historical backdrop, which involves religious conflicts, colonialism, ethnic clashes and border disputes. At the same time, we must face reality. Israel should respect the choice of the Palestinian people and agree to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine. All forces in Palestine should recognize Israel's right to existence and its sovereignty. We hope that the Israeli and Palestinian Governments will act in the fundamental interest of their peoples, respond to the call of the times and make the right choices, so that the two countries can live in peace and develop in harmony.

Secondly, mutual trust must be fostered and peace talks must continue. No one in the Middle East will emerge victorious from war, and the use of force will not lead to peace. Negotiation is the only way to peace. Israel and its Arab neighbours must put an end to violence and conflicts, in particular military actions targeted at civilians, and take steps to rebuild mutual trust. On that basis, they should speedily restart negotiations and make the necessary compromises and concessions to achieve a peace of the brave.

Thirdly, the root causes of conflicts must be addressed and efforts made to find a comprehensive solution. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains the core and root cause of the Middle East issue. That conflict is closely connected with the Lebanese-Israeli issue, the Syrian-Israeli issue and other regional issues, which have increasingly affected each other. To achieve a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East, it is critical that Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace be adhered to. All related issues should be addressed in a coordinated way so as to avoid complicating the already volatile situation in the region.

Fourthly, cooperation must be promoted for the benefit of the people. China calls on Israel to lift its blockade against Palestine, dismantle the separation wall and facilitate the supply of humanitarian assistance to Palestine. Palestine and Israel should expand non-governmental business and trade ties, to enable the two peoples to be the first to enjoy the dividends of peace and to put an end to their longstanding mutual animosity. This, in turn, will create an atmosphere conducive to pursuing a political solution.

Fifthly, it is key to act in an impartial way and step up mediation. The help and support of the international community is essential to progress in the Middle East peace process. It is important that all parties act in an impartial and balanced way and refrain from using double standards.

China supports the efforts of the Quartet. We reiterate our belief that the Security Council should shoulder its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, and we welcome any new initiative that will help move forward the Middle East peace process.

There are bound to be obstacles on the road to peace in the Middle East. However, as long as we engage in peace talks rather than resort to force, seek cooperation and avoid confrontation, enhance mutual understanding and reduce mutual hostility, we will definitely be able to open the door to peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Douste-Blazy (France) (*spoke in French*): A little over a month after the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), which led to the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon and established the parameters for a lasting political solution between the two countries, one fact is clear: stability in the Middle East will require the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, the Palestinian question fuels most of the hotspots in the region. It breeds frustration in public opinion, deepens misunderstandings between different societies, and plays into the hands of extremists.

As the status quo is not a viable one, reviving the momentum for peace between Israelis and Palestinians must therefore become a priority for us once again. A number of factors are coming into play at this time that encourage us to move forward.

The conflict in Lebanon has confirmed the fact that there is no military solution to the crises in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian question is no exception: a lasting solution will be found only through a negotiated process. The parties themselves say that they wish to resume the dialogue. We encourage the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority to take that path.

The regional environment is itself more favourable, with, inter alia, the revival by the Arab League of its Beirut initiative, which sets out the bases for a sustainable peace in the Middle East. We support that initiative.

In Israel and in the Palestinian territories, more than a decade after the Oslo accords, despite the deaths, the destruction and the humiliation endured, the desire for peace is strong among the large majority of each of the two peoples.

However, confidence must be restored on each side. Efforts to restore it must be made immediately through concrete measures on both sides. The release of Corporal Shalit, the soldier kidnapped early last summer, would be one such measure — an indispensable one — together with an end to the firing of rockets, the freezing of all settlement activities, the release of the Palestinian leaders arrested in recent months, and the lifting of the drastic restrictions imposed by Israel on the movement of goods and people within the Palestinian territories and between these territories and the world.

The formation, as announced, of a Palestinian national unity Government that would take on board the demands of the international community would be a major development. If confirmed, such a development would have to lead to a re-evaluation by the international community of its policy on assistance and contacts with the Palestinian Government. It should be turned to advantage so as to give fresh impetus to the peace process. It is because we remain committed to the principles set out by the Quartet that we must encourage current developments, which bring us closer to them. The international community must stand side by side with the President of the Palestinian Authority. He can count on France's support.

This context offers an opportunity to break the stalemate, and the parties must seize it. The international community must help them do so by resolutely committing to help re-establish dialogue and re-launch a genuine drive for peace. An initial step was taken yesterday with the Quartet meeting, which emphasized the urgent need to move towards a just and lasting settlement and identified certain measures that would help restore confidence. Other steps must now follow, such as the preparation of the international conference proposed by President Chirac, the objective of which would be to define the guarantees, especially the security guarantees, expected by parties in the framework of a peace agreement. That international conference could take place in the context of the Arab League initiative and pave the way for a new regional framework for collective security and economic integration.

At this turning point, we are convinced that the danger lies in inaction, and that action would be rich in opportunities. The international community must help the parties transform their new willingness to resume dialogue into a genuine dynamic for peace. The goal of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security is not beyond reach if we are able to demonstrate boldness and, above all, political courage in the weeks and months ahead.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Beckett, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Beckett (United Kingdom): I share in welcoming you to the chair, Madam President.

Events over the summer have shown once again the terrible human cost resulting from the lack of progress towards peace in the Middle East. We have seen it in Gaza, with over 200 fatalities and an appalling humanitarian situation, and in Israel, where rockets continue to fall on civilians. In particular, we have seen its impact in Lebanon, where this summer's crisis had its origins in the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The central importance of peace in the Middle East has never been clearer.

As the British Government has repeatedly emphasized, there can be no higher priority for the international community. I welcome this opportunity for the Security Council to address the issue, and am grateful to the Arab League for the initiative.

The international community is united in the goal of a two-State solution. Only a handful of extremists, who benefit from ongoing conflict, oppose that vision.

I agree with my colleague from Qatar, that we should reinvigorate the road map, which is the framework for getting there. Both sides need to meet their obligations under it. In the Quartet we have a mechanism for coordinating the international community's engagement. I welcome the Quartet's statement from its meeting yesterday, which gives us a clear framework for moving forward.

So we are not short of vision or mechanisms or frameworks. What we need are some practical ideas and, above all, the political will to deliver them. I see four immediate priorities.

First, contact between the parties must be resumed. We welcome the commitments made by both Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas during Tony Blair's recent visit, to the effect that they were prepared to meet without conditions. I particularly welcome the role of Egypt and other Arab States in working for the release of Corporal Shalit, to help create the conditions for a productive dialogue.

Secondly, we need a Palestinian Government with which the international community can engage. That means one that is based — as my Danish colleague said — on the Quartet's three principles. President Abbas is a man of peace and integrity. We support his efforts to form a national unity Government that will work for peace with Israel.

Thirdly, we must address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Pending the outcome of negotiations on a unity Government, the United Kingdom supports an extension of the temporary international mechanism to help alleviate the situation. We are working with European Union and Quartet partners to deliver that.

Then fourthly, we must help develop the institutions of a future Palestinian State as a means to build and sustain peace. That is in no way a new idea, but it remains an important and, increasingly, an urgent one.

Tony Blair said in Ramallah earlier this month that we needed real international support for the process of peacebuilding. We look forward to working with colleagues in the European Union, the Quartet and the Arab world in the coming weeks to develop a new programme aimed at building viable Palestinian institutions that can help deliver peace with Israel and prosperity and security for Palestinians. That is a practical agenda to take us forward. What I believe we may be hearing, and what I would like to see from this meeting today, is a clear commitment of the political will necessary to implement it.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ján Kubiš, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia.

Mr. Kubiš (Slovakia): I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking you, Madam President, for convening the meeting. Today's meeting is perhaps symbolically taking place on the International Day of Peace. As the recent events in Lebanon have proved to all of us, once again, there is indeed no solution based on the use of force, and there is no military solution to the many challenges and problems of the Middle East region, with the Israeli-Palestinian dispute at its core.

The only way to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, is through peaceful negotiations and full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions and the principles defined by the Quartet. In that regard, we welcome yesterday's statement by the Quartet in which it reaffirms its commitment to the road map.

The recent tragic conflict in Lebanon could have been avoided if all relevant Security Council resolutions had been implemented. The conflict again had an unacceptably high price and caused a lot of suffering and destruction on both sides. We believe that resolution 1701 (2006), which we co-sponsored, provides an important basis for starting the process towards a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Lebanese crisis. We consider that resolution to be the first step in fully and urgently addressing all causes that have led to the crisis. In order for the entire process to be successful, full implementation of that resolution is needed. All concerned and relevant parties must fully respect and comply with it.

We call on all relevant parties in Lebanon to secure the release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers. We also agree that it is necessary to address the problem of Lebanese prisoners. Those two issues, however, must not be linked, and the release of the Israeli soldiers must be immediate and unconditional.

The Lebanese Government has to regain full authority and control over its whole territory in order to prevent and stop any activities of domestic and

foreign militias. Those militias must be disarmed and disbanded expeditiously to ensure that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.

Effective measures must be undertaken on the borders of Lebanon in order to prevent the flow of illegal weapons. The arms embargo must be fully observed by all relevant parties. The cooperation of the Government of Syria in that regard is also indispensable and is requested. We also hope the issue of the delineation of the border between Syria and Lebanon, including the Sheba'a farms, will be solved soon.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on all relevant Security Council resolutions, negotiations between the two sides and the agreements reached. We are convinced that the Quartet still represents the most appropriate mechanism for advancing the peace process and that the road map, in a possibly updated form reflecting the recent developments on the ground, represents the most efficient plan for achieving a lasting peace settlement to the conflict.

We welcome the ongoing efforts of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to form a Government of national unity. We hope and expect that such a Government will be committed to the Quartet principles and that its political platform will facilitate an early engagement, as well as the continuation of dialogue aimed at a solution to the Middle East conflict. We also hope, and reiterate our call, for an immediate end to violence by Palestinian factions and the release of the abducted Israeli soldier.

We remain deeply concerned about the economic and humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza. In this regard, we welcome the continuation and expansion of the temporary international mechanism, which will enable the channelling of resources and the delivery of assistance directly to the Palestinian people, and thereby address their urgent humanitarian and financial needs. To this end, we urge Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues, and encourage it to carry out this transfer via the temporary international mechanism. We also call for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access and for the reopening of the Rafah and all other border crossings, which must remain open.

At the same time, we expect the Israeli Government to continue its commitment to peace in the Middle East, based on principles laid out in the road map, and to refrain from such steps and activities as might be contradictory to the principles of international law. In this context, we repeat our call for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators in Israeli custody and for a freeze on all settlement activities.

In conclusion, I reiterate our belief that there indeed exists a window of opportunity to reinvigorate the peace process. That opportunity should be seized by all concerned parties through concrete and immediate action. In this regard, we welcome the prospect of a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the near future with a view to relaunching mutual negotiations. We encourage such continuous engagements among all parties to the conflict.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Taiana, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International of Trade and Worship of Argentina.

Mr. Taiana (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to express my delegation's appreciation for the excellent work done by the delegation of the Hellenic Republic in exercising the presidency of the Security Council during the month of September. I would like to thank you in particular, Madam, for all your efforts in organizing this meeting.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement. I also convey to him my country's appreciation for all his efforts during his tenure aimed at achieving a solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

Argentina believes that the Arab League's initiative to convene this ministerial meeting on the Middle East peace process is very timely. It provides a good opportunity for the Security Council to reflect on the status of the peace process and to begin to consider concrete measures to revitalize it.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has a historical and political importance that transcends the Middle East; it has been a cause of instability in that region for more than half a century. Argentina therefore believes that

the Security Council should attach high priority to the quest for a lasting resolution of the conflict.

The principles of the peace process were set out almost four decades ago by this body, and we do not believe that they should be revised. The occupation that began in 1967 must be ended through a negotiated solution between the parties. The result should be the emergence of an independent, democratic, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State, living in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.

Experience shows there is no military solution to the conflict. The path of violence and mutual rejection will lead only to further suffering for the peoples of the Middle East. If that path is taken, the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to their dignity and to the establishment of an independent State, and the legitimate aspirations of the Israeli people to their security, will be frustrated indefinitely and submerged in a cycle of violence, reprisals and revenge.

The situation in Gaza and the West Bank demonstrates that neither will a policy based on unilateral acts resolve the conflict, and that faits accomplis on the ground, such as the construction of the separation barrier and settlement activities, will only exacerbate resentment, increase distrust and strengthen extremist elements.

Argentina is convinced that there is only one path for the peoples of the Middle East: mutual recognition as a necessary step towards a definitive peace. It is evident that the parties have not, on their own, been able to break the stalemate. The active assistance of the international community is therefore essential if that objective is to be achieved.

The Quartet has an important role to play in this regard. My country reaffirms its support for the Quartet's efforts to guide the peace process, and acknowledges the statement issued yesterday by the Quartet. However, we believe that, given the delays and difficulties experienced in implementing the road map, the Quartet must seriously reflect on the consequences of maintaining the status quo and should consider urgent additional measures to achieve concrete results.

The international community in general should also play a more proactive role in the search for peace. My country believes that the proposal to convene another international conference for the Middle East could contribute in a positive manner to the relaunching of the peace process, and we hope that all interested parties can work in a constructive manner with a view to convening such a conference as soon as possible. In this regard, we believe that it would be a positive step if the Secretary-General were to present a report to the Security Council before the end of his mandate setting out concrete proposals for overcoming the current stalled process.

The efforts of President Abbas to form a Palestinian Government of national unity also deserve our full support. We hope that such efforts will bear fruit and that the platform of the new Palestinian Government will be compatible with the three principles appropriately endorsed by the Security Council: recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence and acceptance of prior agreements.

We believe that there is an urgent need for international assistance to be re-established for the alleviation of the grave humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. Israel must also transfer all Palestinian tax and customs revenues so as to avert the collapse of the Palestinian Authority.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that our vision of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is a comprehensive one. The bases for such a regional peace are the resolutions of this Council, in particular 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1701 (2006), the principle of land for peace, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We in Argentina, which is home to sizeable, active and flourishing Arab and Jewish communities, know that peace is possible.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have carefully considered the initiative of the League of Arab States to ask the Security Council to take a comprehensive look at the situation developing in the Middle East. Given the fact that the peace process in the region has suffered tangible damage, we believe that collective efforts to restore the political dialogue between the Arab parties and Israel would be timely and useful.

The war in Lebanon demonstrated once again that force not only fails to resolve problems, but also delays progress in moving towards just and lasting peace in the world. We need new and substantial momentum towards the resumption of the peace process on all tracks, within the framework of attaining a comprehensive settlement. The release of Palestinian prisoners and of the kidnapped Israeli soldier would create the conditions necessary to help resolve the humanitarian crisis.

Despite the complexities of the situation, we do not consider it hopeless. We continue to believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict holds the key to the fate of the region. It is obvious that as long as the conflict remains unresolved, the region will serve as a breeding ground for extremism, producing an ever growing number of hot spots, and not only in the Middle East.

Opportunities exist for finding political solutions to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We need to take advantage of those opportunities, in particular because the basic programme of action is well known: the road map endorsed by both parties to the conflict. We believe that a leading role must be played by the Quartet of international mediators. At yesterday's ministerial meeting of the Quartet, we took a decision to reinvigorate the work of the Quartet's special envoys and ministers with Israel, the Palestinians and leading Arab countries.

We also welcome Kofi Annan's initiative to return James Wolfensohn to his Middle East team. We believe that Mr. Wolfensohn's considerable experience will help in resolving the Palestinians' social and economic problems. We are convinced of the need to continue to provide robust support to the Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas — whose presence in this Chamber we welcome — in his efforts to establish a government of national unity on a platform reflecting movement towards the Quartet principles. At the same time, it is important that the Palestinians clearly understand the link between their steps to accommodate Israel and progress towards a settlement.

We hope that the international community will support the head of the Palestinian Authority as the leader of the Palestinians, including by providing economic assistance to the Palestinians and releasing sources of financing. Given the extremely complex humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, that is very important.

With regard to the Lebanese track, things are generally headed in the right direction, although the situation remains fragile. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) continues and must be completed. That clearly means that, among other things, all Lebanese political forces must be involved, including Hizbollah. We consider Israel's lifting of the air and sea blockade of Lebanon to be an important step. In addition, we welcome the deployment of units of the regular Lebanese army to southern Lebanon and the continued deployment of a strengthened United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. It is essential that the withdrawal of the Israeli army be completed in the coming days, as scheduled.

We are all concerned by the humanitarian situation in Lebanon. Russia will provide Lebanon with assistance in the form of engineering and sapper units of the Russian army to restore the infrastructure. Preparations are well under way for their deployment, which will occur at the end of the month.

The Syrian track, long dormant, must also be brought back to life. From our contacts with the leadership of the Syrian Arab Republic, we have the impression that Damascus is interested in establishing a lasting peace in the region.

Finally, I should like to emphasize once again that we have a favourable view of the League of Arab States initiative to begin preparations for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East. Russia has always supported that idea, as President Putin noted during his visit to the region in 2005. We understand that it will not be easy to implement this initiative, but we must make progress as soon as possible in our collective efforts to resolve of one of the most complex problems of our day. The conference must be carefully prepared for; it must not be reduced to just a one-day event consisting only of speech-making. The conference is essential as a starting point for the process of negotiating a Middle East settlement on all interrelated tracks.

We must not forget that it was the Security Council that originally adopted the resolutions that form the basis of the process aimed at a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. Our first obligation is to help begin the practical work to achieve that objective.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Asha-Rose Migeqi Migiro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mrs. Migiro (United Republic of Tanzania): Tanzania welcomes this timely debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at the initiative of the Arab League.

We note with sadness the prevailing gloom and suffering that continue to afflict the Middle East region, and the Palestinian people in particular. The current relationship between the State of Israel and its neighbours is increasingly characterized by an erosion of trust. We see that as a serious threat to the huge investment already made in promoting peace and security in the region. Tanzania believes that agreements reached by the parties after painstaking effort must not be allowed to unravel.

We are aware that the Palestinian question is at the core of the crisis in the Middle East. Therefore, the challenge before the Security Council, the United Nations as a whole and the international community is to steer the parties towards the full realization of both the aspirations of the people of Palestine to peace, independence and statehood, and those of the people of Israel to security. It is in this regard that Tanzania continues to support the two-State solution, as provided for in the road map, as a practical strategy in accordance with United Nations resolutions aimed at achieving a just solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

We regret that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is deteriorating rapidly because of continuous — and at times excessive — military operations in Gaza and parts of the West Bank, which have caused death and suffering to civilians. In our view, that state of affairs is not conducive to peace and stability. In addition, the withholding of financial resources from the Hamas-led Government has crippled its functions and has caused hardship to employees and their dependents. That is collective punishment of the Palestinian people and does not contribute to an atmosphere of trust and mutual confidence.

Yesterday, in his address to the General Assembly, President Jakaya Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania encouraged the Quartet to revive the peace process laid down in the road map. He reiterated our belief that a just, viable, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be realized only through a negotiated settlement. We therefore call for respect for all commitments mutually agreed upon. Moreover, we call for an end to all actions that would escalate and aggravate the precarious situation that exists.

For its part, Israel should strive to live on the basis of its democratic and humane origins. It should respect international law and put to an end all practices seen as amounting to the violation of human rights. Israel's restrictions on the freedoms of the Palestinian population, its settlement activities and the building of the separation wall must be stopped, since they do not help the implementation of the obligations under the road map.

It is important to underscore the significance of open communication in a negotiated solution to the conflict. In that regard, we commend President Mahmoud Abbas for his genuine effort to lead the people of Palestine into constructive engagement with Israel for the purpose of reviving the peace process, as well as for his endeavour to form a government of national unity. It is in the interests of the region and of the international community to provide him with the needed support and assistance.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): First, I should like to thank the presidency of the Security Council for arranging this very important meeting on the initiative of the Arab League. Thank you very much for being here, Minister. I should also like to welcome the presence of President Abbas in this Chamber. I believe that this is a very important discussion, and the United States is very pleased to participate.

On Tuesday, in the General Assembly, President Bush affirmed the United States commitment to the vision of two States — Israel and a viable, independent Palestine — living side by side in peace and security. The President believes strongly that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in dignity and with the ability to pursue their aspirations. To this end, the President directed me to work with moderate regional leaders to help Palestinians reform their security services and to support leaders from both sides as they work together to resolve their differences.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert are committed to peace. I look forward to working with them, with our Quartet partners and with our regional friends to bring about the conditions that will allow us to accelerate progress on the road map.

This progress depends on many obligations that both sides must fulfil. It depends, of course, on a true Palestinian partner committed to peace. The United States has unequivocally declared our intention to support the re-emergence of such a partner, and, together with other members of the Quartet, we have called upon the Palestinian Authority to commit to the three principles of the Quartet: renouncing terror and violence, recognizing the right of Israel to exist and accepting previous agreements and obligations, including the road map. We welcome President Abbas's efforts to achieve a unity government that reflects the Quartet principles and that can facilitate engagement on a range of political, security and economic concerns.

We also welcome the meeting in New York, on Monday, of Israeli Foreign Minister Livni and President Abbas, and we are encouraged by statements by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas indicating a willingness to resume direct talks. We continue to urge all parties to foster a positive and hopeful atmosphere in which those talks might take place. And to this end we call again for the unconditional release of Israel Defense Forces Corporal Shalit. We also call for the immediate and unconditional release of the other two Israeli soldiers, who are being held by Hizbollah: Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev.

The United States is, of course, mindful of the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, and we have substantially increased our direct assistance to the Palestinians to $468 million, in a package that includes $275 million in humanitarian aid. Yesterday, we and other members of the Quartet agreed to extend and expand the temporary international mechanism to ensure that Palestinian citizens can receive necessary assistance. We have called for an increase in donor support, and we have asked both parties to fully implement their responsibilities under the Agreement on Movement and Access, so that economic life can be reborn in the Palestinian territory.

The Quartet has declared the urgent need to make progress. I ask the members of the Council to support the Quartet's efforts as we seek to help Israelis and Palestinians achieve the conditions necessary to move forward and to build the foundation for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The United States, I want to assure the Council, is fully committed to this goal and to working actively and urgently to achieve it.

In closing, let me just note that the last time we were in this Chamber it was to adopt resolution 1701 (2006), which brought an end to the fighting in Lebanon. That resolution is being implemented, but there is much work to do. I look forward to the continued engagement of this body to ensure the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) so that the people of Lebanon might also live in peace and so that the Government of Lebanon might fully extend its authority throughout its territory.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Congo.

Mr. Adada (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, my delegation welcomes your positive and commendable initiative to convene this public meeting, upon the request of the League of Arab States. In view of the recent grave developments in the Middle East situation, this is no routine meeting. To the contrary, following the sudden outbreak of violence in the region, the Arab League initiative to call for a ministerial meeting of the Security Council has emerged as an opening to help revitalize the comprehensive peace process, which is currently at an impasse.

The grave events that occurred in Gaza and Lebanon following the abduction of Israeli soldiers highlight the extreme volatility of the situation in that vital region and the risk of a widespread eruption if talks aimed at a comprehensive negotiated settlement continue to languish.

Let us not forget that this is a human tragedy that has endured for six decades. Unfortunately, in the face of the heavy losses and destruction on both sides caused by the new cycle of violence, the Security Council — the United Nations organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security — did not respond quickly enough to shoulder its responsibilities. We regretted this vacillation, which was misinterpreted by the victims of the excesses and by international public opinion.

Resolution 1701 (2006) has made it possible to open up new prospects in the Israel-Lebanon crisis. We need to foster such developments and support all efforts to build a peace that must not remain fragile. We need to take advantage of this respite to seek viable, lasting solutions to all the problems involved, such as Lebanon's national unity and sovereignty and its relations with its neighbours, and Israel's security.

In that regard, a strengthened United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon now has a particularly crucial role to play. We commend the countries that quickly answered the call for a speedy mobilization of forces to confront this dangerous situation. France and Italy merit our appreciation. We encourage other countries to participate in this operation, which could be of enormous help in creating new conditions for peace. We also welcome the generosity of major donors in rebuilding Lebanon.

But such developments, however positive they may be, must not cloak the sad reality of the tragic situation the Palestinian people face daily. We encourage Hamas to shoulder its responsibilities as a governing authority by accepting the validity of previous commitments in the context of a settlement of the Middle East crisis. At the same time, we call upon the international community to continue humanitarian assistance to a population that, owing to the circumstances, is reduced to depending largely on the outside world for daily survival. We also encourage all Palestinian political forces to seek unity and to put an end to all provocations, which have negative consequences and which, moreover, do not resolve the problem of the liberation of the occupied territories.

Our concern here is to help relaunch the peace process without creating a new framework for negotiations or new rules. The rules exist and are well known. First of all, there are all the relevant Security Council resolutions, which all — I stress "all" — the parties must implement. For too long, the Council has been accused of bias for continuing to close its eyes to violations by one of the parties to the conflict and to that party's failure to comply with the Council's resolutions. Secondly, we have the Arab peace initiative, based on the principle of land for peace; we believe that this represents a good basis for a negotiated settlement. Thirdly, we have the Quartet road map, which is based on recognition of the existence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

If today's debate can help the key players — the parties themselves and the sponsors of the peace process — to return to the negotiating table and implement the principles of the road map, that would be an invaluable contribution by the Security Council, which cannot stand aloof from a situation that affects international peace and security — the Council's main raison d'être. The Security Council must make it clear to the parties that there can be no solution to the Middle East crisis based on the use of force. The only useful approach is that of a political and diplomatic settlement, and it must be resumed immediately.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tatsuo Arima, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan.

Mr. Arima (Japan): Japan welcomes the timely convening of this Security Council meeting, at the initiative of the League of Arab States, to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is timely because the recent hostilities in Lebanon have made us recognize anew the need for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. It is therefore our hope that this meeting will pave the way to an early resumption of direct talks between the parties concerned for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. Japan believes that the United Nations needs to play a more active role in facilitating and supporting the peace efforts of the parties involved, as the peace there will be a global blessing as well.

As we continue our concerted efforts to restore peace in Lebanon, we must remain deeply aware of the dire deterioration of the human condition in the Palestinian territories, which the recent crisis in Lebanon has overshadowed. The only cure for this region's predicament will be a peace achieved by the political will and efforts of the leaders of the parties. Japan remains deeply committed to encourage and assist such political will and efforts, in close cooperation with the international community as represented here at this Council meeting.

As regards the situation in Lebanon, Japan shares the view that to rebuild stability in Lebanon, the full and steady implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) is essential. It is imperative that the international community support the efforts by the parties to secure disarmament of militias in Lebanon and delineation of the country's international borders

in order to ensure a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution.

Japan intends to lend its maximum support to Lebanon as part of its overall efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, recognizing that the stability of southern Lebanon is one of the keys to comprehensive peace and stability in that region. In this connection, Japan calls on Syria, another party to the Middle East peace, which has a crucial role in achieving the goal, to join proactively in the international efforts.

The present impasse in the Palestinian question must be dealt with with the utmost urgency. Japan welcomes and supports the determined efforts of President Abbas to break the impasse by establishing a national unity Government of the Palestinian Authority. It is Japan's strong expectation that the new Palestinian Government will make it clear that it will pursue coexistence and co-prosperity with Israel through dialogue. The international community, for its part, should seize such a moment as an opportunity to move the peace process forward. Japan strongly expects also that Israel will positively respond to this opportunity and make its best efforts to resume such a dialogue. Japan welcomes the recent statements by the two leaders expressing their readiness to hold a summit meeting and hopes that it will lead to a long-awaited resumption of peace talks between the two parties.

Along with the political impasse, we should also address the worsening security and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. All our efforts are doomed to fail if we cannot bring about a sense of improvement in their daily lives and a hope for their future. With this in mind, Prime Minister Koizumi, during his visit to the Middle East last July, promised humanitarian assistance totalling $25 million, thereby fully disbursing the $160 million that the Prime Minister pledged to President Abbas in May last year, when he visited us, to alleviate the predicament of the Palestinian people.

In addition, Prime Minister Koizumi, believing that it was of vital importance to generate hope for all the people in the region, proposed a programme called the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity. That initiative, aimed at promoting the development of the Jordan Valley through regional cooperation, was enthusiastically welcomed and endorsed by the leaders of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. Preparations are now underway to form a consultative body of the four parties to materialize this concept. It is Japan's belief that, while the international community needs to address the immediate needs of the Palestinians to ease their lives, it is equally important to pave the way for future coexistence and co-prosperity by bringing the parties together to work jointly for common purposes on a longer perspective.

Japan is determined to continue to cooperate with all the parties both in the region and outside it to put an end to this longest conflict, which has lasted virtually since the end of World War II, causing so much death and misery to so many people. I here thank the Arab League, the United Nations and all others who have made the holding of this meeting possible to help revitalize the Middle East peace process.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Allow me to start by expressing my appreciation to all of you, and to His Excellency the Secretary-General, for participating in today's extraordinary ministerial meeting of the Security Council to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and to thank you for the kind words addressed to me.

Greece fully subscribes to the statement that is to be delivered later by the Foreign Minister of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

It is a privilege for me to be presiding over this extraordinary Council meeting, and I would like to thank you all for having supported the efforts of the presidency in making today's meeting a reality. This is a great honour and, at the same time, a very humbling experience.

All of us in this room are well aware of the multifaceted challenges that we face in the Middle East. Such is the nature of those challenges that they affect not only the peoples of the region — not only the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Lebanese, the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians and others — but the entire international community. All of our global partners, whether they be the European Union, the Arab League or the Non-Aligned Movement, to name but a few, consistently place the question of the Middle East very high on their agendas.

Despite the variances that we observe in the statements and positions formulated in these forums, there is one crucial element that is common to all: one

that has been uttered by all here in this Chamber, and that is the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This is our common goal, and this, I believe, constitutes the collective will of all the peoples of the world, as expressed by their representatives repeatedly during the opening of each session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I cannot think of any other conflict that has held the unwavering attention of so many for so long. And yet, as years turn into decades, generations grow up knowing nothing but hatred. Reason and understanding give place to fundamentalism and extremism. Despite the collective desire to see peace prevail, generations of Israelis and Arabs have been denied the right to live in freedom and security.

That is why my role here today is indeed humbling. I am humbled by the suffering endured by so many for so long, by the tears of mothers who have lost sons and daughters to this conflict, and by the courageous vision and commitment of those who, throughout the history of this troubled region, have genuinely sought to bring about peace and have paid the ultimate price in the name of this cause.

To honour the innocent victims, and as an obligation to the children yet unborn, we must ensure that we will spare no effort, that we will leave no option unexplored and that we will exhaust all possibilities in pursuing and, ultimately, in achieving this elusive peace. We all have our part to play, no matter how small or how large, and we share a collective responsibility to assist the peoples of the Middle East to realize their aspirations to live in dignity and in peace and to view their future with hope and optimism.

As a citizen of Athens and guided by the spirit of this city's ancient forefathers, I cannot but maintain my firm belief in the prevalence of reason: reason, tolerance, acceptance and even — to use a Greek word — symbiosis, over force.

And what does all this tell us? It tells us that peace cannot be served by refusing to recognize the existence of one's neighbour, nor can it be served by perpetuating a climate of fear and insecurity through a combination of suicide and missile attacks, and nor can peace be advanced by such practices as the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit. Equally, it tells us that peace cannot be achieved by denying an entire nation its rightful place where it can live in dignity and freedom, nor can it be achieved by imposing such restrictions, which are both humiliating and disparaging, constituting an acute obstacle to any prospect of normalcy in one's daily life; and nor, indeed, can peace be achieved by forcefully confiscating lands and by erecting barriers.

Any settlement of the Middle East conflict needs to conform to international law, including the resolutions adopted by this Council. It has to be the product of negotiations, the outcome of which should not be prejudged by unilateral measures on the ground. The principles that should form the basis for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region are well known to all of us. They include all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We expect the Quartet to continue its active engagement in order to fulfil its specific role. We welcome its recent decision to meet on a regular basis, including with the parties and other regional partners, to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead. And we look forward to concrete results arising out of this. We support President Abbas's efforts to form a Government of national unity that we hope will adhere to the principles of the Quartet and promote the cause of peace. And we should also realize that causes cannot be promoted or achieved through violence and terror and, at the same time, that security cannot be guaranteed by military means alone.

I appeal to all sides to let reason and understanding prevail. Let them prevail so that the seeds of peace that have already been sown by the international community may be given a chance to take root and flourish on the fertile and historic lands of the Middle East to the benefit of all the peoples of this region and of the world as a whole.

I now resume my functions as President.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries also align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

The dramatic developments that we witnessed during the past few months have again demonstrated the urgent need to move from violence and hatred to peace and confidence. I would like to thank the Arab League for its initiative in convening this session, as the European Union also sees that the most pressing issue is to end the current stalemate in the peace process. There are no military or unilateral solutions to any of the challenges and problems of the Middle East. Lasting peace and security in the region can only be ensured by a comprehensive settlement with, at its core, a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The urgent need to change developments in the region is dictated first and foremost by the fact that the situation on the ground is deteriorating and we must urgently take measures to alleviate the situation of the Palestinian people. The economic and humanitarian situation is severe in the Palestinian territories: 70 per cent of the population live under the poverty line, most of them children deprived of their basic needs.

The European Union has mobilized more resources than ever before to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian people, including through the temporary international mechanism for assistance to the Palestinian people. This mechanism has allowed substantial resources to be channelled directly to the Palestinian people during the past few months, and it has now been extended. We encourage donors and others in the region to make full use of this mechanism. The European Union repeats its call on Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. These resources are needed in order to improve the severe situation of the Palestinians.

The humanitarian situation is directly connected to the question of access and movement. That is a major problem in the Palestinian territories in general and in Gaza in particular. The European Union has stressed in its contacts with Israeli counterparts that the border crossings such as Rafah and Karni be opened and remain open. We urge the parties urgently to take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access, and, in that regard, the European Union reiterates its continued commitment to the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah.

The viability of an agreed two-State solution is threatened by the continued enlargement of settlements and the continued building of the separation barrier on Palestinian land. The European Union will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties.

The European Union demands that Palestinian militants cease all violence directed towards Israel or other Palestinians. The Israeli soldier must be released immediately and unconditionally. The detained Palestinian ministers and legislators must also be released. The European Union also urges Israel to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including its obligation to protect civilians and not to use disproportionate measures. Security is not an exclusive matter for one party — it matters for everyone in the whole region.

The European Union stresses the need to solve underlying problems by political means. Therefore, we welcome the announcement by the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, on an agreement to form a Government of national unity. The European Union has expressed its hope that those negotiations will be rapidly and successfully concluded and that the new Government's political platform will reflect the Quartet's principles and allow for early engagement.

There is also a need to proceed on a diplomatic path regionally. That is why we need support for the peace process from all regional partners. The ultimate goal is to reach a comprehensive and sustainable peace in the Middle East. It is imperative to create a new dynamic towards that goal.

The European Union welcomes the statement of the Quartet issued yesterday, which reaffirms the commitment of the Quartet to the road map. The road map has as its aim the creation of two States living side by side in peace and security. In order to achieve that, all parties must respect their obligations under the road map. The European Union gives its full support to the Quartet's intention to meet on a regular basis in the coming period, as well as to engage actively with the parties and other regional partners to monitor developments and to discuss the way ahead.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Executive Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Abbas (Palestinian Authority) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delighted to attend this meeting of the highest body in the international community, which holds the fate of the world in its hands, and I am sure that it is in the safest possible hands. On this occasion, allow me to sincerely thank you for agreeing to convene this meeting to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. If this meeting shows anything, it shows that the world wants to reach a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict as quickly as possible, in order to eradicate a source of tension that affects all aspects of life, not just in the Middle East, but also in the rest of the world.

Naturally, this meeting was convened in response to an initiative by the League of Arab States and its Secretary-General, my brother Amr Moussa. I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who have spoken so far. I have been made keenly aware that the representatives present here want to reach a just, comprehensive and permanent settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, and I really hope that their sincere, lofty words will be followed by concrete deeds leading to the achievement of a settlement, namely, the establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side with the State of Israel.

As my brothers in the Arab world had agreed, the Foreign Minister of Bahrain took the floor to speak on our behalf and expressed our common position. He stated what we deep down wish to see.

I have nothing to add to what he said in that regard. I would just add that we are fully committed to peace through negotiations. We are committed to international legitimacy, to the road map of the Quartet and to living with our neighbours in peace and security.

I will stop here, Madam President, as I have a rather lengthy statement to deliver in the General Assembly in one hour. Thank you all very much.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the items on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5531

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 September 2006

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5531st (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 September 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 5531st (closed) meeting, held in private on 22 September 2006, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)'.

"The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Albania, Finland, Germany, Italy and Serbia to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"Members of the Council and His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, had an exchange of views."

06-53148 (E) 220906

United Nations S/PV.5532

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5532nd meeting

Friday, 22 September 2006, 1.15 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Martinez Gramuglia
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Japan	Mr. Shin Yo
	Peru	Mr. Gallardo
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Henzab
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Mlynár
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2006/728)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-53208 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2006/728)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/728, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan. Members also have before them document S/2006/758, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Co to proceed to the vote on the draft resolu Unless I hear any objection, I shall now resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so de

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denm Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Q Federation, Slovakia, United King Britain and Northern Ireland, Unite Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 vo The draft resolution has been adopted u resolution 1709 (2006).

The Security Council has thus c present stage of its consideration of th agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5532/Corr.1

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5532nd meeting

Friday, 22 September 2006, 1.15 p.m.
New York

Corrigendum

Cover page

The name of the representative of Japan *should read* Mr. Shinyo

06-53703 (E)